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THE  
GOOD  
LIFE



THE SCIENCE  
BEHIND NY APPLE  
BREEDING



EXPLORING  
UTICA'S CULINARY  
LANDSCAPE

OUR  
ANNUAL  
FOOD  
AND DRINK  
ISSUE

AL FRESCO DINING  
AROUND  
THE REGION

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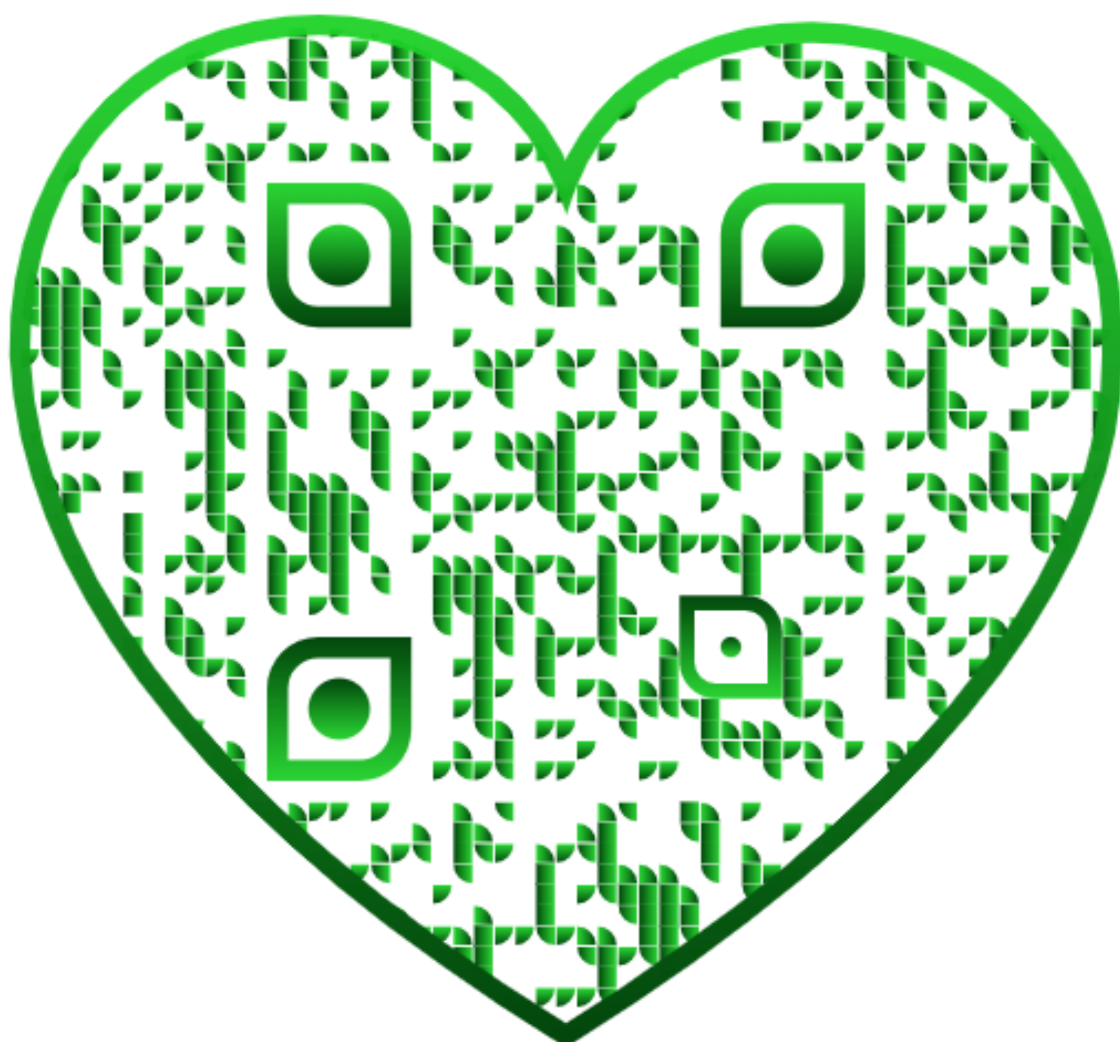
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**ON THE COVER**

A movement away from drinking alcohol is gaining popularity, including here in CNY (see page 56 for story). Photo courtesy The Rooftop Lounge. Design by Susan Santola.

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## Editor's letter



# Ice cream castles in the air

**We** recently had a deck built at our house, so my family can finally eat meals outside and have friends and loved ones over to enjoy it with us.

Whether the setting is a backyard, camp or a park, dining outside is a luxury a lot of Central New Yorkers look forward to during warm weather months. With that in mind — and in case you don't feel like cooking — we highlight a few regional restaurants with fantastic ambiance and views from their outdoor seating areas.

While brightly colored cocktails or cold ones in koozies seem to go hand-in-hand with summer, there is a growing movement across the country to cut out or reduce alcohol consumption. The trend has proponents here in CNY, and bar owners and restaurateurs are getting creative to include non-drinkers.

And although we mostly think of apples in the fall, writer Jackie Perrin looked at some scientific work happening year round to create the crispiest, tastiest fruit.

In our fourth feature, we turn toward Utica and its many tempting restaurants. It's difficult to cover a city's dining scene in a few pages, but we tried to hit some of the old and new not-to-be-missed spots, knowing that, unfortunately, we couldn't include every business. We hope the story

will be a jumping-off point for further exploration of all Utica has to offer.

In our regular departments, we consider the benefits of eating local, celebrate the new location of Riseform Brewing and anticipate the opening of Cream & Coffee, open a bag of freeze-dried candy to see what the fuss is about and learn chef Tamica Barnett's pasta salad recipe for our next cookout. Read about the impact that access to an HBCU tour has on Syracuse City School District high schoolers, chew on ideas for reducing your food waste and find out about the often-costumed bicyclists creating community as they ride through Syracuse city streets.

To close out this edition, we present a double scoop — ice cream's past and present in Onondaga County — with a look at historical ice cream makers, and a Q&A with Gina Husted, co-owner of Skippy's Ice Cream. I can just hear the truck's jingle coming down my street.

We hope you enjoy this issue — and some good eats!

Amy Bleier Long  
ableierlong@advancemediany.com

As always, we'd love to hear from you about story ideas, thoughts, tips, suggestions, you name it. Drop us a line at [info@readcnymagazine.com](mailto:info@readcnymagazine.com).

**And now, a word from our contributors:**



**Norah Machia**

"Who knew there was a unique twist being made to nostalgic candies, making them popular among all generations? Learning about the process of freeze-drying classic candies was both fun and fascinating."

*On writing about the freeze-dried candy trend*



**Gloria Rivera**

"I've recently graduated from the same program Novak did when she decided to pivot and pursue her dreams. I hope to embody the same bravery and fearlessness during my own transition into my career."

*On writing about musician and festival founder Jess Novak*

**Correction:** On p. 92 in our last issue, we credited pictured bracelets to the wrong artist. They should have been credited to Beth DuBois. We apologize for the error.

PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK, COURTESY NORAH MACHIA, GLORIA RIVERA





## Love Where You Live

This is CNY is a new website celebrating good news and good living across Central New York. The platform is also used as a recruitment resource for CNY companies looking to attract talented candidates to our region. Thank you to our community partners for supporting This is CNY.

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Non-alcoholic beverages are popping up at more CNY restaurants and bars, following a national trend.

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An overview of the city's vibrant culinary scene, influenced by Utica's diverse population.

PHOTO BY CHARLIE MILLER



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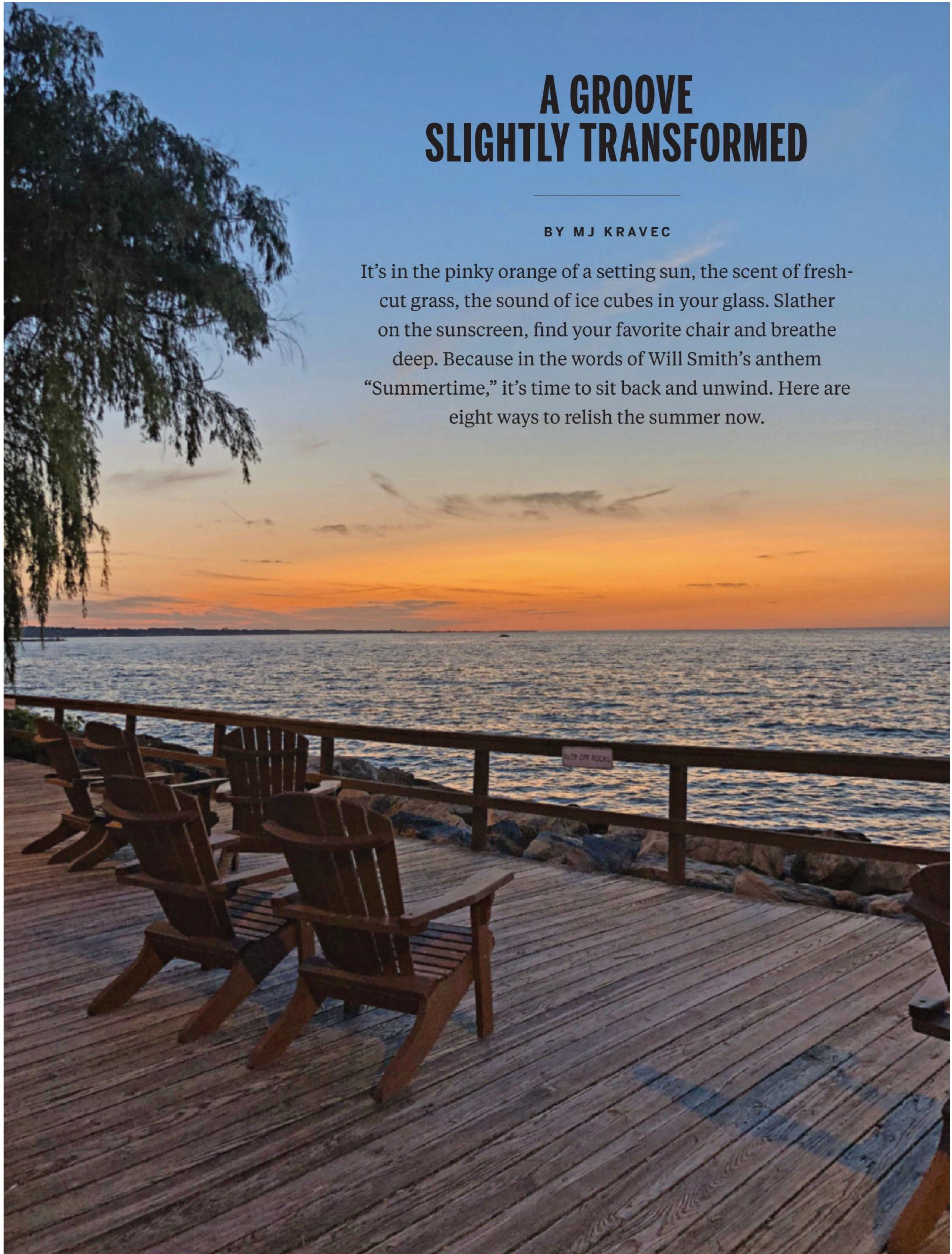
# *It's all good*

||||| POSITIVE VIBES • OUR TOWN • MARKET TRENDS

## A GROOVE SLIGHTLY TRANSFORMED

BY MJ KRAVEC

It's in the pinky orange of a setting sun, the scent of fresh-cut grass, the sound of ice cubes in your glass. Slather on the sunscreen, find your favorite chair and breathe deep. Because in the words of Will Smith's anthem "Summertime," it's time to sit back and unwind. Here are eight ways to relish the summer now.





## It's all good



### STAYIN' GOLD

Head downtown for the 100th anniversary of the Hotel Syracuse, also known as the Marriott Syracuse Downtown. This three-day celebration kicks off Friday, Aug. 16, with the Centennial Gala: a black-tie sit-down dinner in the Grand Ballroom featuring an open bar and live entertainment, benefiting the OHA. The next day, the hotel's 100 Year Birthday Bash features a sit-down dinner, open bar with 1920s-themed cocktails and live entertainment, much like their New Year's bash. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Rescue Mission, McMahon Ryan Child Advocacy Center and Food Bank of CNY. On Sunday, Aug. 18, 100 Year Community Day will feature an open house with indoor and outdoor events, wedding walk-throughs in the Persian Terrace, live bands, activities for kids and ghost tours. Tickets for sale on Eventbrite. For more info, visit [hotelsyracuse100.com](http://hotelsyracuse100.com).

### THOSE SUMMER NIGHTS

Use herbs for more than cooking and create your own Midsummer's Night Dream pillow with these instructions from Mother Earth News. Gather a silk or cotton cloth (you can recycle from old clothing or bedding material) and cut in a long rectangular shape. Sew into a bag on two sides, leaving an opening. Insert enough rice and dried herbs — such as lavender for a calming effect, mint for refreshment or rosemary for rejuvenation — to fill the bag. Stitch the bag closed and place underneath your pillow or over your eyes and inhale the scent deeply for a restful sleep.



### SNIP TIP

The more you pick, the more they produce. Keep your basil bursting all summer with this tip from Better Homes & Gardens. When harvesting, avoid pulling leaves off the plant and instead snip roughly  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch above nodes where offshoots grow from the stem. Store cuttings in water at room temperature until ready to use.



### CRUNCH TIME

If you're pickling cucumbers, add a few grape leaves (clean and washed) to your jars. The tannins in the leaves will give your pickles a satisfying crunch.



### GOTTA JAVA

Save your used coffee grounds to fertilize garden plants. From farmflavor.com: Sprinkle used grounds around the perimeter of plants to infuse soil with potassium, magnesium, phosphorus and nitrogen.



### YOU LAUGHING IN THE PURPLE REIGN

Join Farmstead 1868 for its 2024 Lavender Festival, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sat. July 6. Spend a day on the farm and take in the calming scent of lavender fields. Featuring classes, samples, demos and vendors. 4690 Shephards Rd., Cazenovia. Pre-sale tickets only. Visit [farmstead1868.com/2024-lavender-festival](https://farmstead1868.com/2024-lavender-festival)



### THE WAY, WAY BACK

There's something about summer that takes you back to your childhood. Make the most of a rainy day and indulge yourself at your local library by revisiting books, movies, music and TV shows from one of your favorite childhood summers. Cap the day off with a classic childhood treat from an ice cream truck (see our interview with Skippy's Ice Cream's co-owner on page 98).



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## GETTING FRESH

Eat local for the most flavor and nutrition

BY LORNA OPPEDISANO

Eating local isn't just good for the health of your community's economy — it's also beneficial to your wellbeing.

There are a variety of reports that suggest staying close to home when gathering your groceries can positively impact your health. According to a Healthline article that cited numerous studies from the National Library of Medicine, Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI) and others, local produce is often fresher — and more flavorful — than its imported supermarket counterparts. Thanks to the shortened time between harvest and to-market, some fruits and veggies have more opportunity to ripen before reaching your table. That freshness isn't in taste only; some produce lose nutrients, like vitamin C or antioxidants, during long transport and while sitting on supermarket shelves.

From an emotional and mental health standpoint, eating local is good for you, too. Reporters at Healthline point out the potential for connection with farmers and food producers,

giving you context about where your food comes from and an opportunity to connect with the folks who produce it.

Or take eating local to the highest level with gardening! A 2022 article from the Mayo Clinic notes that along with an improved diet of immunity-boosting fruits and veggies, gardening has proven to facilitate increased exercise through functional movements and to reduce stress levels.

*To practice:* Cornell Cooperative Extension ([cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension/local-offices](https://cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension/local-offices)) offers many tools for eating and gardening locally, including a list of regional farmers markets and resources for farmers. Check out local produce and connect with others by joining a consumer co-op such as Syracuse Cooperative Market ([syracuse.coop](https://syracuse.coop)) or GreenStar Food Co-op in Ithaca ([greenstar.coop](https://greenstar.coop)). Whether you decide to support an area farmer, take a crack at it yourself or some combination of the two, eat local, drink local and be healthy!





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# Hamilton

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ALAINA POTRIKUS BECKETT

The village of Hamilton (named in honor of Alexander Hamilton) is nestled in the hills of Madison County, its quaint downtown business district emerging from the agrarian landscape. The stately campus of Colgate University brings 2,800 students to the area each year. While the historic architecture, much of it part of the Hamilton Village Historic District, stands as a testament to the past, entrepreneurs focused on the future continue to bring new energy with restaurants and retail.



The Hamilton Movie Theater is across the street from Colgate Bookstore.

## THINGS TO DO

A **farmers market** takes over the village green each Saturday, and food trucks frequent the area during the week. Catch a film at **Hamilton Movie Theater**, an iconic village landmark that dates to 1895. See a live performance at the **Palace Theater**, which brings in local and national acts; Hamilton Creates, which operates out of the theater, hosts workshops for local creatives. Chill out with yoga and Pilates at **The Zen Den**; sculpt with barre classes at **Plank Hamilton**. Colgate's museums and galleries include **Clifford Gallery**, the **Longyear Museum of Anthropology**, the **Linsley Geology Museum** and the **Picker Art Gallery**. Paint your own pottery at **Village Clay**, where experienced instructors can guide you through the basics of pottery making, from shaping and trimming to glazing and firing. Check out memorabilia at the **Hamilton Public Library**, which rotates exhibits in its local history museum throughout the year. Explore the gallery at **Hamilton Center for the Arts**, which offers art exploration classes for children, teens and adults of all skill levels. Pamper yourself at **Lotus Salon & Spa** and **Sandra Ray Beauty Company**.



Sip your coffee at FoJo Beans.

## HAVE A DRINK

Start your day at **FoJo Beans**, which pours and roasts small-batch coffees from fair trade sources. Longstanding bar **The Hour Glass** is popular with students, staff and the greater Hamilton community. For a sports bar vibe and pub menu, check out **Rusch's Bar and Grill**, which packs in fans on Colgate game days. Don't miss **Martha's on Madison**, which regulars call "MOMs." The tavern hosts weekly tiki and "no mic" nights and serves up local drafts, bottles and cans, a curated wine selection and specialty cocktails. Select the perfect wine for your next dinner party at **Crush Bottle Shop**, which also offers small group tastings and classes. Enjoy local craft beer, wine or non-alcoholic beverages al fresco at **Social Haus at Good Nature Brewing**, which launches a new Euro-American-inspired menu this summer. The picturesque farm brewery was the first in Madison County and has grown into a popular destination for beer and food, along with live music.





Cookies from Flour & Salt Bakery and Cafe.

## GRAB A BITE

Have a hearty breakfast at **Broad Street Diner**, and grab lunch at **Hamilton Eatery** (open during the academic year), where the menu includes a wide variety of sandwiches, salads and wraps. Enjoy authentic Vietnamese cuisine at **Friends and Pho**; other international favorites include **Main Moon Chinese** and **Royal India Grill**. Order a brick oven-fired pie from **New York Pizzeria** (also known as “Slices”) or enjoy imported pasta and paninis from **Oliveri’s Family Pizza**. Dine at **The Tavern** at the historic **Colgate Inn**, known for its refined rustic fare as well as a lively happy hour and Saturday brunch. Enjoy a meal and conversation at **Flour & Salt Cafe**, where the breakfast and lunch menus focus on ingredients from local farms; around the corner, their satellite bakery on Maple Avenue sells breads and bagels, pastries and desserts. Stop into **Hamilton Whole Foods** for vegetarian and vegan fare, as well as bulk natural foods. Indulge your sweet tooth at **Maxwell’s Chocolates & Ice Cream**, with a nostalgic soda parlor atmosphere that complements the decadent menu of desserts. Outside the village beside scenic Lake Moraine, the historic **Hamilton Inn** serves modern farmstead fare. Though technically in Bouckville, Hamilton residents consider **Ray Brothers BBQ** one of their own.

“I have lived in other towns and villages where it felt hard to become a part of the fabric of the place, but Hamilton always has its arms open. ... People are excited and ready to support events, businesses, nonprofit efforts and the like.”

Britty O’Connor, co-owner of Flour & Salt Bakery and Cafe and Martha’s on Madison

## SHOP LOCAL

**The Colgate Bookstore**, which has school spirit apparel, lifestyle items, gifts and books (beyond textbooks), is located in the village to strengthen the link between the community and the university. Drop into **Evergreen Gallery**, known for custom framing and hand-selected housewares and gifts. Find the latest women’s fashions and accessories at **Magnolia Grace** and **Shol’s Boutique**. Find something special at **Swank**, where a bright and airy showroom is filled with curated finds for the home. Bring home a treat from **Nosh Gourmet Food Emporium**, known for small-batch and from-scratch specialty foods like infused olive oils and vinegars, local honey and syrup, and a signature bloody mary mix. Step back in time at **Adorn/Retrospect**, run by a mother/daughter duo who specialize in vintage clothing and home decor. Find a new or vintage wedding dress, as well as other formal attire, at **Circa Bridal Boutique**, open by appointment only. Experience a modern-day general store at **Parry’s**, a second-generation family-owned business that stocks everything from locally made products to lawn and garden supplies. Or make a quick stop at **DK Grocery**, a bodega-style convenience store on the **Village Green**.

## ANNUAL EVENTS

Now in its 16th year, the **Hamilton International Film Festival** spotlights independent features, documentaries, world cinema and short films each July. The village marks the **Fourth of July** with a parade through the historic business district; fireworks at dusk are presented by Colgate University. Downtown fills with music in the summer months at **Thursdays on the Village Green**. Enjoy live music and food trucks at **July Jam at the Heritage Barn**. Local restaurants come together to serve **Supper Under the Stars** in August. **The Great Hamilton Chocolate Train Wreck Festival** annually marks the anniversary of a derailment that spilled Nestle chocolate bars. Local legend has it that children rushed to the scene to stockpile the sweets. People come from all over for **Madison-Bouckville Antique Week**.



Posters for sale at Swank.





A serene spot on the Colgate campus.

GET OUTSIDE

Help harvest the **Colgate Community Garden**, which produces over 35 varieties of vegetables, fruits, herbs and cut flowers. Hike the 8-mile **Chenango Canal Towpath Trail** and an additional offshoot that follows the abandoned O&W railbed (in the winter, bring your cross-country skis or snowshoes). Hit the links at **Seven Oaks Golf Club**, an 18-hole course designed by renowned architect Robert Trent Jones. Stroll the **Colgate campus**, which is home to more than 2,300 trees, including sugar maples and northern red oaks that arch in a picturesque canopy over campus roads. Catch a youth or collegiate baseball game at **Hooks Wiltse Field**, where there is also a small playground, basketball court and volleyball nets. Less than a mile north of the village, enjoy the view of the valley while surrounded by wildflowers and wetlands on the **Gateway Reserve trails**; the wide mowed path is maintained by neighbors of the protected nature preserve.

PHOTO BY ALAINA POTRIKUS BECKETT



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## SUMMERTIME, AND THE LIVIN' IS EASY

BY AMY BLEIER LONG  
PHOTOS BY AMELIA BEAMISH

As we soak up as much summer as we can, we're thinking of cookouts and relaxing by the water. Whether you're entertaining a group, enjoying morning tea or just snacking, add these packaged foods made by Central New York and Upstate companies to your cupboard or fridge. Scale up your accessories and decor with fish motifs. And if you're by the pool, river, lake or just on your back deck, we found a few items to make enjoying the season a little easier. You can also make summer last beyond Labor Day with a cute accessory.

**FLOAT ON** Small coin purse blue, \$50, Skaneateles 300, 2 W. Genesee Street, Skaneateles, 315-685-1133, [skaneateles300.com](http://skaneateles300.com).



# STOCK THE PANTRY



## WILD TIMES

Wild Organic Chaga tea, \$12, Almost Local, 18 W. Park Row, Clinton, 315-466-9059, almostlocalshop.com.



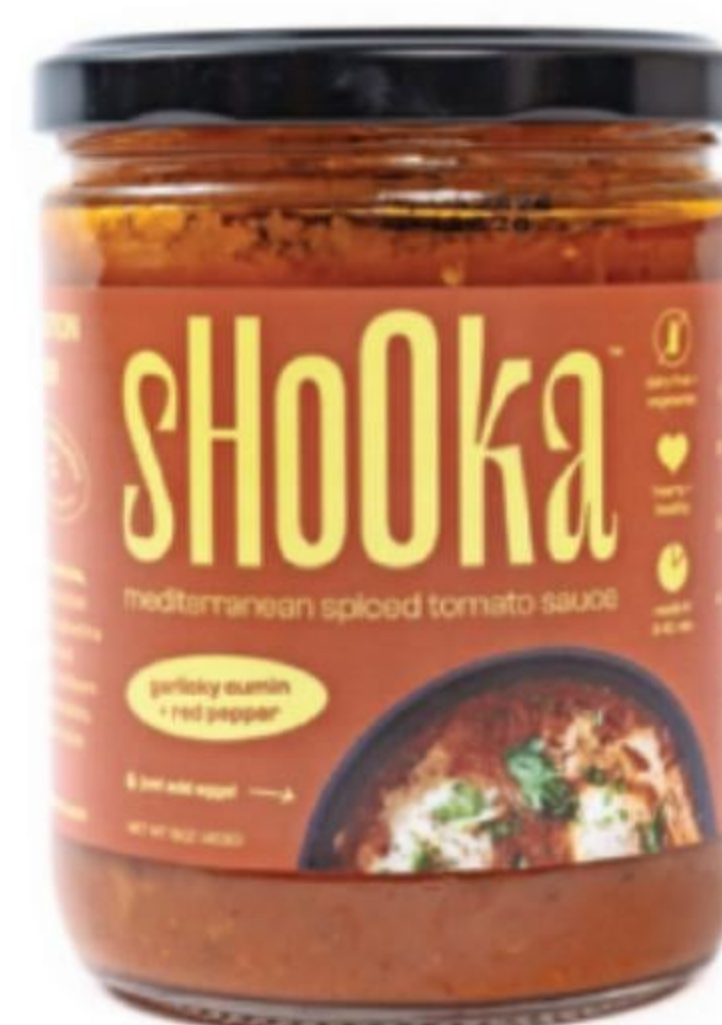
## GOING FOR GOLD

Suede Sauce Co. Liquid Gold, \$12.50, The Station 603, 603 E. Seneca Street, Manlius, 315-682-8741, thestation603.com.



## TAP INTO THIS

Tap Root Fields Spicy Maple Drizzle, \$12.95, Rhubarb Kitchen and Garden, 59 E. Genesee Street, Skaneateles, 315-685-5803.



## I'M ALL SHOOKA

Shooka Mediterranean Spiced Tomato Sauce, \$14, shookasauce.com.



## LIME TO SHINE

River Rat Cheese tequila lime cheddar, \$10, First National Gifts, 2 E. Genesee Street, Skaneateles, 855-810-9076, firstnationalgifts.com.



## AT A GRAN-ULAR LEVEL

Fika lemon granola, \$12, 20|East, 85 Albany Street, Cazenovia, 315-815-4540, 20-east.com.



## HOT STUFF

Rodfather's XXX Dog Dare Hot Spice Rub, \$8.99, Witty Wicks, 190 Township Boulevard, Camillus, 315-672-3110, wittywicks.com.



## READY FOR THIS JELLY

Hunter & Hilsberg hot pepper jelly, \$5, BeeKind, 118 Milton Avenue, Syracuse, 315-299-6073, beekindsyracuse.com.



### QUITE A PICKLE

Cheffrey's Pickle Pub dill pickles, \$9, BeeKind.



### OH, HONEY HONEY

Queen Helen's honey, \$8 for one pound, The Wren's Den, 2756 W. Seneca Turnpike, Marcellus, 315-952-5954, thewrensden.business.site.



### LET THE CHIPS FALL

Chica Celita's Seasoning, \$6.95, and Chica Celita's Salsa, \$8.95, Rhubarb Kitchen and Garden.



### SAVOR THE FLAVOR

BBQuse sauces, \$8 each, Witty Wicks.

### DIP IT GOOD

Nelson Farms bread dip mix, \$3.50, 20|East.



### TAP OF THE LINE

Tap Root Fields Rhubarb Drizzle, \$12.95, Rhubarb Kitchen and Garden.



### PUMP UP THE JAM

Elaine's Homemade Jam marmalade, \$7.99, Salt City Artisans, 226 Hawley Avenue, Syracuse, 315-479-0400, saltcityartisans.com.



# SOMETHING'S FISHY



## DON'T BE KOI WITH ME

Hand-painted koi floor cloth by Marilyn S. Fegan, \$375, Cazenovia Artisans, 39 Albany Street, Cazenovia, 315-655-2225, [cazenoviaartisans.com](http://cazenoviaartisans.com).



## PERCH ON THE TABLE

Fish platter, \$24, Inspired, 7468 Oswego Road, Liverpool, 315-622-3000, [inspired-vhd.com](http://inspired-vhd.com).



## TIPPING THE SCALES

Large multi fish pouch, \$195, Skaneateles 300.



## CRACK ONE OPEN

Bottle opener by The British Blacksmith, \$40, Salt City Artisans.



## MUG SHOT

Enamel mug, \$14.99, Witty Wicks.

## IN THE BAG

Bookmark, \$6, Parthenon Books, 333 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, 315-463-8485, [parthenonbookstore.com](http://parthenonbookstore.com).



## REEF MADNESS

Mansfield shirt in ecosystem isle green, \$79, Emma + James, 25 Jordan Street, Skaneateles, 315-685-2747, [shopejclothing.com](http://shopejclothing.com).







#### MAKING A SPLASH

Reversible raincoat fish/stripes, \$109, Bev and Co., 18 E. Genesee Street, Skaneateles, 315-685-5064, bevandco.com.



#### FISHING FOR COMPLIMENTS

Freshwater pearls, Thai silver plate fish pendant by Nancy Powell, \$35, Salt City Artisans.



#### WHAT A CATCH ALL

Large Summer Tote with tie closure and two inner pockets by Wendy Edwards Designs, \$125, Cazenovia Artisans.



#### FISH BOWL

Campagna Pesce melamine serving bowl, \$79, Paola Kay Gifts, 105 Brooklea Drive, Fayetteville, 315-632-2192, paolakaygifts.com.

#### THE CAT'S MEOW

Slow feeder bowl, \$14.99, Witty Wicks.



#### GILL POWER

24-by-12-inch cotton chambray lumbar pillow with appliqued and embroidered fish, \$42, Inspired.



#### DOWN BY THE RIVER

River 4-inch coaster set of four with holder, \$15.99, Colorful Inspirations, 170 Township Boulevard, Camillus, 315-320-4364, colorfulinspirations.com.





# POOL AND PATIO

## LAYING BACK

Flat hair clips, \$14.99 each, The 315 Hive Boutique, 8395 Oswego Road, Baldwinsville, 315-857-6690, 315hiveboutique.com.



## COOL STORY

Clawsome Cool Horizons soft cooler, \$78, Synple, 70 Main Street, Camillus, 315-320-4212, shopsynple.com.



## OOH I WANNA TAKE YA

Aruba reversible tankini top, \$84, and bikini bottoms, \$59, with UPF 50 sun protection, Bev and Co.

## ARE YOU JELLY?

Kerah Lucite Flower Sandal in Amalfi Blue, \$65, Otis + Matilda, 65 Albany Street, Cazenovia, 315-815-4494, otisandmatilda.com.



## WE'RE SPOILED RATTAN

Scallop Woven Party Tub with galvanized metal insert, \$75, M. Graham Interiors, 309 Vine Street, Suite 3, Liverpool, 315-440-6637, mgraminteriors.com.

## SKIRT THE ISSUE

Wildflower Watercolor quick-dry RipSkirt, \$50, The Rose Cottage, 214 S. Manlius Street, Fayetteville, 315-637-1330, therosecottageny.com.



## BEER WITH ME

Koozies, \$8 each, Salt Point Shop, 100 Brooklea Street, Fayetteville, saltpointshop.com.



#### PRETTY PICNICKING

Small Kiernan tray with cloche, \$83, Synple.



#### HELPFUL HOODIE

Mandy Tunic sun shirt, \$104, Paola Kay Gifts.



#### TRUNK SHOW

The Bayberry Trunk in tangerine summer tiles, \$72, Emma + James. White Cap Boardshort in Navy Floral, \$98, Sea Culture, 11 Jordan Street, Skaneateles, seaculturebrand.com.



#### GRILL-A WARFARE

Grill Right bristle-free grill cleaner, \$16.99, Paola Kay Gifts.



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# Good news

||||||| DOWNTOWN DOINGS • CAUGHT DOING GOOD • THE SEEN



## A SMALL BREWERY WITH BIG HEART

After opening in 2021, Riseform Brewing Co. quickly became a popular spot for families and neighbors. Owner Andy Tidd and his wife, Meg, wanted to create a gathering space and share handcrafted beer with the Marcellus community. Last year, when Tidd's lease on Main Street was ending, he was determined to stay in town. Luckily, 19 North Street opened up and the move allowed Tidd to expand.

Working closely with Marcellus-based McClurg Remodeling, Tidd architected a beer hall with three times the brewing capacity. He invested in top-

quality electronics for live music events and eight taps serve Tidd's IPAs, ales, stouts and lagers. For non-beer drinkers, there are mocktails and sodas. Customers bring their own food (many order from neighboring restaurants) to enjoy at long tables while kids play with Legos and games that line the windowsills.

The Tidds are focused on doing good and spreading joy; they hold fundraisers for local nonprofits and host special events. "Being part of the community is as important to me as the beer," he says.

*For more information: [riseformbrewing.com](http://riseformbrewing.com)*





From left, Brian Tran, Syracuse Bike Party co-founder Katy Lawson, Caitlin Tran and Mark Ryan before the prom-themed ride in April.

## PEDAL POWER!

Syracuse Bike Party champions community on and off the road

BY SARAH TIETJE-MIETZ

On a drizzly Saturday night in April, the sun has not even started to set when the partygoers begin to arrive. Some show up in sparkly dresses, sharp suits and thrifted tuxes from decades past. Most have gone the casual route, wearing jeans and t-shirts, work pants and flannels, hoodies and raincoats. One couple slow dances to music while a camera captures the moment.

It feels like a scene straight from a John Hughes movie, except this is no high-school dance — it's the Syracuse Bike Party (SBP), and it just so happens to be their prom-themed ride.

This group of Syracuse cycling enthusiasts has met monthly since their first organized ride in May 2021, and SBP founders — married couple Katy Lawson and Alex Lawson and friend Josh Wilcox — were unsure if anyone would even show up initially. It was a year into the pandemic, and the three felt the need to

create something meaningful in Syracuse that would celebrate community and connect people through cycling. Twenty riders showed up for the inaugural event, and the group has only grown, with the biggest ride to date clocking in around 180 bikers.

The party takes place on the last Saturday of every month and usually kicks off in Clinton Square. Each ride features a festive theme to dress and decorate around. It's an element the Lawsons adopted from rides they took part in before moving back to the area from Baltimore.

"It's really fun to do costumes, and people started to like that, so we added more themes," says Katy Lawson. "It just gives it something else to look forward to!"

Themes vary, and past months have featured togas (for the Ides of March), Pride, back-to-school, and each May they honor

PHOTO BY AMELIA BEAMISH



the first event with an anniversary ride. This year they celebrated by taking up a 1900s tradition of bedecking the bikes with flowers. The Halloween ride is the most impressive, with specters of death, cartoon characters and even a squashed squirrel (a nod to the Party's furry mascot) rolling through the city. It's a sight to see, and the bikers with the most creative costumes are awarded trophies for their efforts.

Rider Meghan Hickox joined the party a few years ago, and has made most of the monthly rides, minus a few in the coldest winter months. Dressed in a dazzling red sequined dress perfect for the prom theme, she recalls coming close to bailing on the first ride she joined, almost letting her shyness keep her from attending.

"It's a very awesome, friendly, fun, inclusive community. On the first ride that I came to, Josh, Katy and Alex were very welcoming. They just wanted to get to know me...and one of them even bought me a beer," says Hickox. "And now every month when I come here, it's like running into old friends. So there's this really awesome little community that we've built, that I love being a part of."

Each month, Alex Lawson creates a new route through Syracuse; rides range from around five to eight miles, with maps and distances posted on social media before the event.

"Part of it (planning) is to go through more city neighborhoods," he says. "That's where people feel comfortable, and riders learn good places to go if they're not familiar with biking through the city. And you get to see a lot more people on their porches and out in their yards, which makes it a lot more fun than just being in traffic."

The camaraderie, enthusiasm and joy are evident to anyone catching them zooming by. Neighborhood residents clap and cheer, and drivers honk their car horns in encouragement. It's an audible extension of support for what the SBP is building: a community that embraces and celebrates the city and citizens of Syracuse.

Coraima Gonzalez and fiancé Brandon Grealish connected with this inclusive community vibe, and it's in part why they joined the Party for their first ride in April, after following the group on social media for months.



For more information: Follow @BikeSYR on Facebook or @syracusebikeparty on Instagram.

Top, Melissa Diamond, left, and Meghan Hickox.

Middle, the Halloween ride is one of the largest expressions of the group's creativity.

Bottom, participants ride through city neighborhoods with lights on themselves and their bicycles for safety.



“If you look at their Instagram and Facebook, they really make it feel welcoming, and I was like, ‘I need to be part of that!’” says Gonzalez. “I’ve never had one of these experiences and thought I would be part of it today.”

Anyone is welcome to join the party, and people of all skill levels and ages attend, with bike types ranging from street to mountain, cargo to pedal assist and e-bikes. If flat tires or other mishaps occur, there’s always enough tubes, patches, pumps and goodwill to keep riders on the road.

Each ride wraps up at a local bar, restaurant or brewery. They’ve descended upon Emerald Cocktail Kitchen in Tipp Hill, Maxwells in Hanover Square and Meier’s Creek Inner Harbor Taproom, among others. Harvey’s Garden on East Water Street has been a favorite post-ride spot. Owner Michael Greene recalls that the

last time the group showed up, there were about 75 bikers, all with lights flashing and spirits high, feeling akin to a flash mob overtaking the food truck park and beer hall. He says it added a wonderful spark to the last half of the night.

These post-ride gatherings are an opportunity to toast each other’s efforts, welcome newcomers and share stories with one another, and Wilcox credits them with creating essential links between community members, many of whom are involved in advocacy, local government, nonprofits or the arts. Whether you’re a new or returning rider, there is a place in the party for everyone.

“We try to keep it fun and welcome new people into the circle or to the table,” says Wilcox. “I feel like there is nothing like connecting people, because you never know what stories will be made.”



SBP participants in May at the group’s third anniversary ride. The floral theme comes from the 1900s trend of adorning bicycles with flowers.

PHOTO BY AMELIA BEAMISH

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“We all have something to share,  
not always money, but we all can share.”



Mary Pat and Joe Hartnett are members of the Upstate Legacy Society, which was established as a tribute to donors who have included the Upstate Foundation in their estate plans. Someday, their legacy gift will blossom and grow in the healing garden at the Upstate Cancer Center.

Mary Pat was a nurse at Upstate University Hospital for 27 years and is now retired. She explained her interest in the healing garden. “I used to work with many oncology patients, and I knew what the healing garden could be for them, and for other patients and staff as well. Every week, I would walk by it.”

“She talked about it often when she was working and continued to talk about it after she retired,” Joe added.

Both Mary Pat and Joe view their philanthropy as a way to share their values about making a difference.

“We take so much enjoyment from this. We all have something to share, not always money, but we all can share.”

Please join Mary Pat and Joe in making a legacy gift today!



To read their complete story, visit [www.UpstateFoundation.org/LegacyGiving](http://www.UpstateFoundation.org/LegacyGiving), or to create your own legacy gift, call Upstate Foundation at 315-464-6490

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From left, HBCU tour founder Monique Wright-Williams, recent Morehouse graduate Azian Goodrich and tour chaperone and guidance counselor Mark Mason during Goodrich's spring break visit back to Syracuse.

## LEADING THE WAY

Expanding the possibilities for college-bound students to find a culturally rich educational home

BY SUSAN KENNEDY

As a child growing up in the Bronx, Monique Wright-Williams faced what she describes as some rough bumps. She didn't always feel valued. "We didn't do a lot as a family," she says. Yet education was prioritized, a nonnegotiable. "College was the expectation. There were no two ways about it," Wright-Williams says. So she headed north to Syracuse University, graduated, married, got her master's degree and has been in Central New York ever since. As the current Chief Engagement Officer for the Syracuse City School District (SCSD), education remains a priority in Wright-Williams' life. "It opens doors." But she understands it's not always a priority for youth.

In 1998, she set out to change that. Wright-Williams founded a program to take SCSD middle and high school students to visit colleges such as Old Dominion University, Rutgers and Columbia. It was a motivational tour. "Students often struggle

with what they are going to do with their future. These tours give them a push that 'Look, you can do this, you can be in college somewhere.'"

During the initial tours Wright-Williams noticed a challenge. "It was hard, depending on who was outside at the time of the tour, for our students to picture themselves walking on campus." She discovered, too, that older siblings of tour participants — those closer to college application time — wanted to join the tour. She soon focused the tours on older teens in grades 10-12 and on visiting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Seeing people of color is believing, says Wright-Williams. "You're going to see yourself at an HBCU," she says.

Azian Goodrich saw himself at Morehouse College in Atlanta where he graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in business administration. "The tour experience was life changing," says

PHOTO BY SUSAN KENNEDY



Goodrich. As a high school junior in SCSD's specialized P-Tech program at the Institute of Technology (ITC), Goodrich joined the HBCU tour. "I was surrounded by people with my same mindset, goals and aspirations," he recalls. For more than a week in 2019, Goodrich joined a bus full of about 50 SCSD high school students to tour seven HBCU schools throughout the southeast. The students must apply in October and acceptance

is based on grades, behavior and recommendation letters. They spend months prior to the trip getting to know one another and their goals and are quizzed on each college before their arrival. When Goodrich stepped off the bus at Morehouse, he says it felt right. "The history, the alumni such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Spike Lee, the environment filled with successful people of color — I understood this could be a place for me."

As a high-achieving student encouraged by his parents, Goodrich had great grades in P-Tech at ITC, was in elementary and middle school engineering and robotics clubs and founded his own youth development leadership firm, The FAM Global (The Future Always Matters). At Morehouse he continued his growth working with various college leadership programs, entrepreneurship and business internships, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, all while achieving high academic honors.

"The environment you are in makes you," says Goodrich. He's grateful to Wright-Williams and the HBCU tour for showing him a world outside his Syracuse hometown. While Goodrich was at Morehouse, he would speak to the tour groups when they visited. "I tell them to look ahead. Get some exercise. Use a planner. Create relationships with different types of people and be a good friend. There's a life out there that you can build for yourself."

Of the 600-plus students who have toured with Wright-Williams over the past 26 years, Goodrich is but one of more than 40 who enrolled at an HBCU. The majority end up attending other colleges, many closer to home. But Wright-Williams maintains the experience is still invaluable for all the students. "Experiential learning is the most powerful kind of learning," she says. "I want them to see what is possible."

The tour is often the first time students have left the state, stayed in a hotel or seen other climates and cultures. In between



**THE TOUR EXPERIENCE  
WAS LIFE CHANGING.  
I WAS SURROUNDED  
BY PEOPLE WITH MY SAME  
MINDSET, GOALS  
AND ASPIRATIONS."**

Azian Goodrich,  
Morehouse College graduate

college stops, the group has visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., and the National Center for Civil and Human Rights Museum in Atlanta, where one display invites students to participate in a lunch counter sit-in simulation, replicating the four Black college students who sat down at a whites-only diner to protest segregation in 1960.

"It's living history," says Wright-Williams. "They had heard about it, read about it, but never been able to touch and feel it and think about the importance of why you need to get an education." As the college tour occurs over spring break, she adds some fun, too, for the students: a visit to Disney World or Universal Studios.

The HBCU tour is funded primarily by the school district and personal donations, so Wright-Williams hustles each year to organize the details. With the help of chaperones like Nottingham High School guidance counselor Mark Mason, 27 students attended the 23rd tour this past spring. (The pandemic paused the annual trip for a few years.) For Mason, the highlight is visiting former high school students thriving in their college campus home. "We see their excitement and pride. We learn about their next goal and opportunity. It's thrilling to envision what their future is going to look like!"

For Wright-Williams, who gives generously of her time sitting on boards for nonprofits including the American Heart Association, the YMCA and Vera House, helping students find a culturally synced educational home matters.

"Your life is yours," says Wright-Williams. "But it's so much more enriched when you share it with others."



*For more information or to donate to the program: Contact Monique Wright-Williams at 315-435-6459 or MWright-Williams@scsd.us. Registration typically takes place during the Parent University Family Engagement event in October each year, or students may speak with their SCSD school counselor for more information. Students in grades 10-12 are invited to apply to join a tour.*



APRIL 8

Solar eclipse parties

The day started sunny, then gradually grew cloudier as the much-awaited total solar eclipse drew near. Thousands of people across Central New York gathered at homes, parks, local venues, hills and landmarks to witness this once-in-a-lifetime event. Then, just at the right moment, the clouds parted enough to give everyone a peek as the moon edged its way between the Earth and sun blanketing the Earth in darkness. Syracuse.com’s Teri Weaver reported: “...it wasn’t just any Monday. Hundreds of people gathered on rooftops in downtown Syracuse, spontaneously shouting in the few instances when the clouds parted and a sliver of sun shone through. Generations watched together at Onondaga Lake Park. Many of the few kids that had school this morning stayed home. Thousands got to gawk on the Syracuse Mets field before watching a late-afternoon baseball game. A 99-year-old woman born on the last total eclipse in Syracuse got to see this one with her family. One couple celebrated their 40th anniversary, with telescopes and college students.”



- 1. People gathered near the Museum of Science and Technology in downtown Syracuse.
- 2. Spectators take in the event at Syracuse University.
- 3. SU students gather at the Shaw Quad on campus.

PHOTOS BY KATRINA TULLOCH, SCOTT SCHILD, JULIA CARDEN



4



6. Selkirk Lighthouse at Salmon River started flashing its light due to the sudden darkness.

7. People watched in awe at Selkirk Lighthouse.

5



4. Thousands gathered at NBT Bank Stadium.

5. Viewing the eclipse on the SU campus.

6



7





**APRIL 12-14**

## Syracuse Fashion Week

Syracuse Fashion Week celebrated 10 years of local artistry with standing room-only sold-out shows. Featuring 26 designers, 22 hair stylists and make-up artists, 14 vendors, a juggler, dancer and actor, and more than 200 models, the event raised \$,2500 for the Food Bank, bringing its grand total to more than \$20,000 over 10 years. The anniversary celebration will continue with Fall Fashion Week in October.



**1.** Precious Williams wears a gown from Styles by Bellamy at the Syracuse Fashion Week Gala at Mohegan Manor.

**2.** Eliza Jeffers wears a design by Michelle DaRin at Local Love at the Best Western Syracuse Downtown hotel.

**3.** Dajaveon Bellamy in jewelry and tie from Beading Wolves at Mohegan Manor.

**4.** Loren Marusarz models a design from Spirit + Thread Crochet at the Underground Show at the Middle Ages Brewing Company Beer Hall.

**5.** Ally Berry in a design by Cat of the Hill at Local Love at the Best Western Syracuse Downtown.

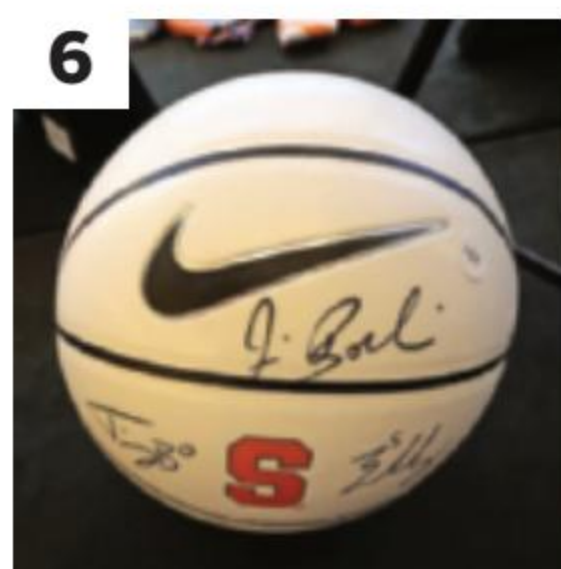
PHOTOS BY DENNIS FERNANDO



APRIL 27

## Basket Ball Gala

The Jim and Juli Boeheim Foundation's 25th annual Basket Ball Gala at Turning Stone Resort Casino featured a star-studded guest list that included Syracuse University alum Mike Tirico as emcee and former Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski as one of its speakers. The Boeheims raised \$1 million for their foundation, which seeks to enrich the lives of children in need throughout CNY while supporting cancer research and advocacy. Guests included SU men's basketball head coach Adrian Autry, assistant coaches Allen Griffin, Brenden Straughn and Dan Engelstad, SU women's basketball head coach Felisha Legette-Jack and her husband, David, and SU football head coach Fran Brown.



1. Jim and Juli Boeheim being interviewed at the Basket Ball Gala.
2. Suzie and Vinny Lobdell attend the event at Turning Stone Resort Casino.
3. The event raised money to support cancer research and child advocacy.
4. Gerry McNamara and Jim Boeheim at the mic as Juli Boeheim looks on.
5. Player Kyle Cuffe and coach Allen Griffin greet guests.
6. A signed basketball was up for auction at the event.

PHOTOS BY DENNIS NETT





Take advantage of the views, ambience and delicious food these Central New York and Upstate restaurants provide.





# FRESH-AIR FARE

SAVOR MEALS WHILE  
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SUNSHINE IN THESE  
SPOTS WHERE YOU CAN  
DINE WITH A VIEW

BY DANIELLE BENJAMIN

## The Blue Canoe Grill

Nestled along the banks of Tuscarora Lake, The Blue Canoe Grill has everything you want in an eatery for a warm summer day. Diners love basking in the sun on the extensive back decks, sipping on signature cocktails while enjoying the lake views. The menu features a variety of classic American dishes, Italian pastas and Polish favorites. Head Chef Peter Kuzawski crafts specialties like golumpki and pierogi from scratch, and the homemade curly fries are not to be missed. Regular customers look forward to their yearly Polish night in October and Anniversary Party every November.

3568 N. Lake Rd., Erieville,  
315-662-8040, [bluecanoe grillandcabins.com](http://bluecanoe grillandcabins.com)

PHOTOS BY CHARLIE MILLER, CRAZY DAISIES, DANIELLE BENJAMIN,  
THE POST-STANDARD, JANE MARMADUKE WOODMAN



## The Brewster Inn

The Gilded Age mansion of The Brewster Inn overlooks the southern tip of Cazenovia Lake, creating the ideal outdoor dining area. Throughout the year, the on-site restaurant has an impressive list of signature and seasonal cocktails and mocktails to accompany a menu inspired by flavors around the world. Guests can savor New Zealand lamb, Cape Cod mussels, Thai calamari, Maine lobster and Mediterranean hors d'oeuvres. In the summer months, the dining area multiplies in size as the tables flow out onto the large stone patio. On Tuesday and Wednesday nights, the restaurant invites guests to bring their own wine to enjoy with dinner, while Friday nights feature fried fish specials.

6 Ledyard Ave., Cazenovia,  
315-655-9232, [thebrewsterinn.com](http://thebrewsterinn.com)



PHOTOS COURTESY THE BREWSTER INN





## The Cider Mill

One of Central New York's most beloved restaurants levels up their dining experience in the warmer months with an expansive outdoor seating area. Diners look forward to eating the seasonal menu items al fresco on the stone patio among the shimmer of string lights and the comfort of the lush trees surrounding the restaurant. The Cider Mill features a rotating menu of carefully crafted dishes that embrace each season, alongside fresh pasta and dry-aged steaks. A robust list of seasonal cocktails and mocktails rounds out the dining experience. Live music adds to the summertime festivities.

4221 Fay Rd., Syracuse,  
315-487-0647, [thecidermill.us](http://thecidermill.us)



## Syracuse Boat Tours

Keep your eyes peeled for a new, floating dining experience. Syracuse Boat Tours, launching this summer, plans to offer 60- to 90-minute cruises on Onondaga Lake. Various cruises will highlight the spectacular lake sunsets and the history of Onondaga Lake. Themed tours are planned with featured cocktails, wine and bourbon tastings, and shuttles to concerts at the amphitheater. The cruises will offer charcuterie boards, sandwiches and adult beverages.

*For the most up-to-date information, visit [syracuseboattours.com](http://syracuseboattours.com).*



## Crazy Daisies

For anyone who has ever wanted to be surrounded by lush flowers and plants while dining outside, Crazy Daisies is the place to be. The family-owned business truly shines in the summer months when the greenhouses are full and the produce is fresh. The Cox family — Jennifer, Glenn and their six children — has been in business for over two decades, adding food service to the nursery in 2018. The introduction of their flower-garnished mimosa flights made ripples in the local food scene shortly after they opened the café. In addition to their botanical cocktails, the garden café serves a locally sourced menu of small plates, salads, sandwiches and pizzas. The venue is bustling all summer long with diners spread out on the wrap-around deck and at picnic tables throughout the yard. Hands-on workshops, live music, craft shows and more fill the calendar.

4693 Kasson Rd., Syracuse, 315-498-5525, [crazydaisiesflowers.com](http://crazydaisiesflowers.com)



PHOTOS BY A GRACEFUL EYE: KATRINA TULLOCH, CHARLIE MILLER



## The Rooftop Lounge

One of the best date night spots in Central New York is on a rooftop in Oswego. When The Rooftop Lounge opened atop the newly remodeled Litatro building, it brought a unique dining experience to the lakeside city. Featuring a modest menu of small plates alongside an impressive cocktail, mocktail and spirits list, it has quickly become a local favorite. All year long the restaurant boasts beautiful views of the city, including where the Oswego River meets Lake Ontario. But when the weather cooperates, two rooftop patios open up inviting guests to enjoy the views more closely. Various seating options are available with fire pits and blankets to keep you warm on the chillier nights. The restaurant also hosts live music, liquor tastings and whiskey nights.

*189 W. 1st St., Oswego, 315-207-2078, [therooftoplounge.com](http://therooftoplounge.com)*





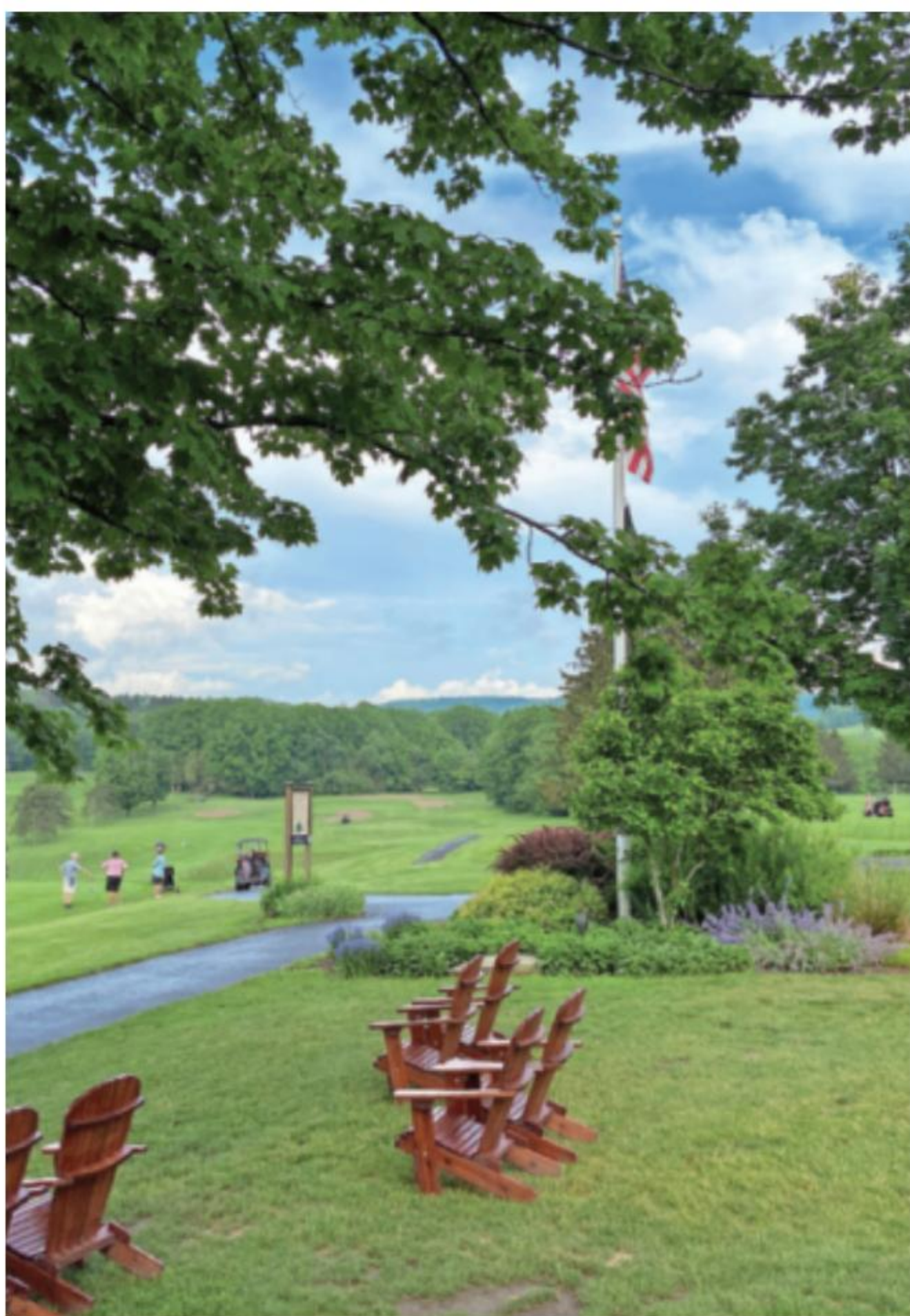
## Yards Grille

For one of the most scenic views, look no further than Yards Grille in Fayetteville. Perched above the sprawling greens of the Green Lakes Golf Course and the turquoise waters of the lakes themselves, the restaurant's backdrop is simply stunning. The quaint menu features classic American dishes with modern twists alongside a clever golf-themed cocktail list. All of the food options are light and perfect for those hot summer days.

*5648 Green Lakes Park Dr., Fayetteville, 315-632-6015, [yardsgrille.com](http://yardsgrille.com)*







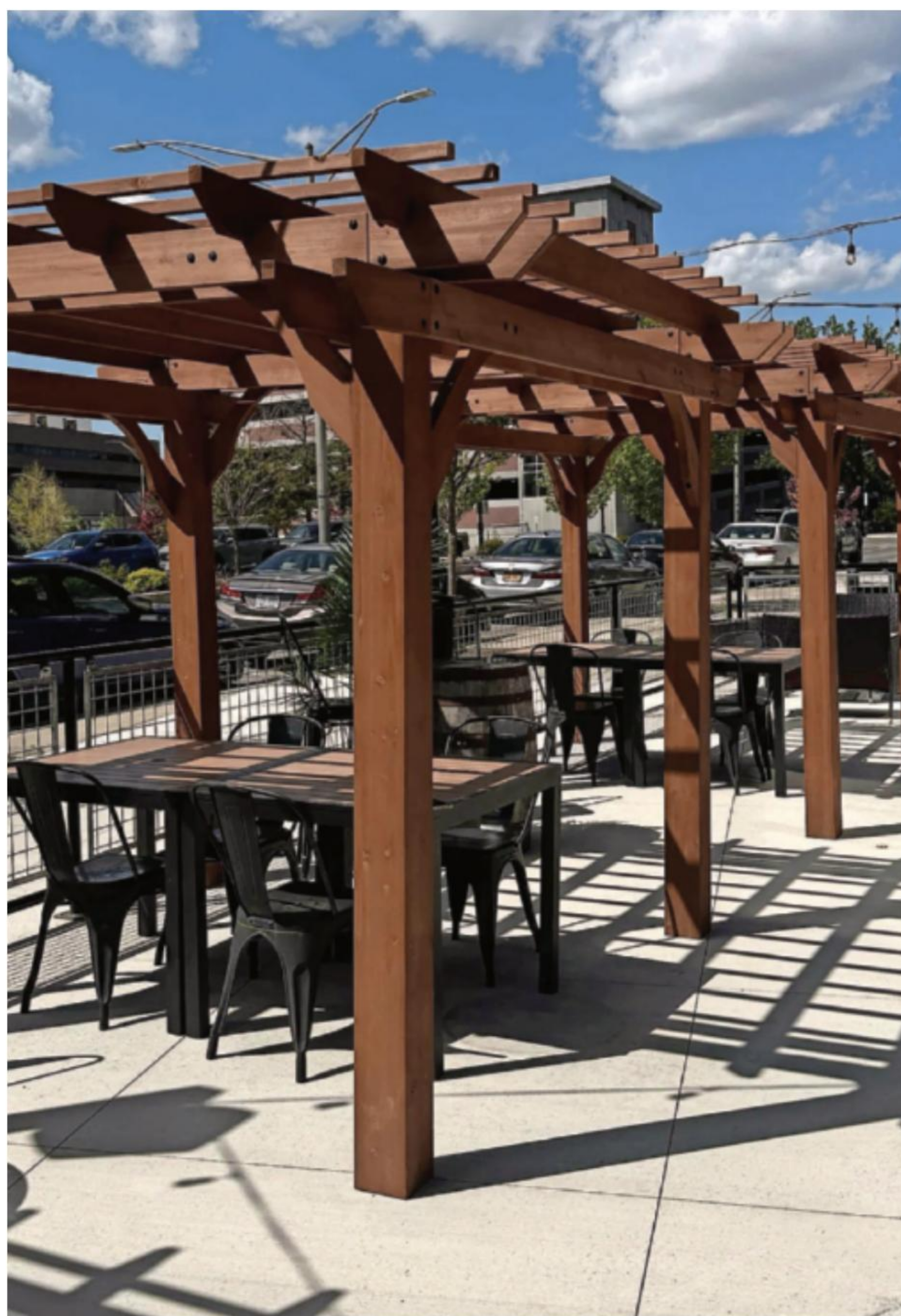
PHOTOS BY CHARLIE MILLER, JANE MARMADUKE WOODMAN



## Downtown by Chef Jay

The third installment in Beer Tree Brewery's growing enterprise opened in downtown Binghamton in March 2022. Just shy of its second anniversary, the restaurant reopened in February of this year with a new concept as Downtown by Chef Jay. After a short remodel, the urban eatery now boasts a more upscale dining experience under the direction of locally renowned chef Jay Pisculli. The farm-to-table menu features raw oysters, bone marrow, Romanesco broccoli, pork belly tacos and several other creative dishes. Guests can enjoy a mix of indoor and outdoor seating in the heart of Binghamton. In addition to a few streetside tables available in the warmer months, the rooftop bar provides the perfect spot to savor their award-winning brews and a selection of snacks during brunch, happy hour or a night on the town.

20 Hawley St., Binghamton, 607-235-3286, [beertreebrew.com/downtown-by-chef-jay](https://beertreebrew.com/downtown-by-chef-jay)



PHOTOS COURTESY DOWNTOWN BY CHEF JAY





PHOTOS BY CHARLIE MILLER, JANE MARMADUKE WOODMAN

## Francesca's Cucina

Eating at Francesca's Cucina in downtown Syracuse is a typical city dining experience. A cozy atmosphere enclosed within brick walls serves as the backdrop for a delicious menu of Italian classics. But when the weather is just right, guests can step through the restaurant and into the urban oasis of their outdoor patio. Francesca's outdoor dining area is truly like a magical garden amidst a concrete jungle. Diners are surrounded by wooden trellises, hanging lights and shrubbery that combine to provide one of the most beautiful dining scenes in Central New York. Patio dining is available through reservations and for private events.

545 N. Salina St., Syracuse,  
315-425-1556, [francescas-cucina.com](http://francescas-cucina.com)









Above, Susan Brown, Ph.D., professor of plant breeding, genetics and horticultural sciences. Left, students in the Cornell Horticulture program can grab a snack from the apple vending machine on the first floor of the Plant Sciences Building.

# CORE CURRICULUM

Finger Lakes fruit breeders create apples with amazing taste and fan appeal

BY JACKIE PERRIN

Have you ever wondered what gives your favorite apple variety its sweet, juicy taste and addictive, crispy bite? Ask the Crunch Doctor. During her four-decade career at Cornell University, apple breeder Dr. Susan Brown has spent thousands of hours cultivating seedlings she hopes will eventually become the next apple superstar. Brown runs the oldest apple breeding program in the United States and one of only three full-time apple breeding programs in the country. Since its inception in 1880, Cornell's apple breeding program has released 70-plus new varieties, including Cortland, Empire and Jonagold. The program is headquartered at Cornell AgriTech, a multidisciplinary center where researchers from fields such as horticulture, entomology and food science collaborate to create practical solutions for farmers and businesses.

PHOTOS BY JASON KOSKI/CORNELL UNIVERSITY





Brown was hired to head Cornell's cherry breeding program in 1985. In 1990, she switched to apple breeding and has been creating new varieties ever since. She is the Herman M. Cohn Professor of Agriculture and Life Sciences and splits her time between research and extension/outreach to consumers and growers.

### **A SWEET PARTNERSHIP**

Before arriving at Cornell, Brown earned a Ph.D. in quantitative genetics from the University of California, Davis. She is quick to praise her Finger Lakes coworkers and says, "My program benefits greatly from collaboration with other colleagues at Cornell and the USDA germplasm repository at Geneva."

Another key to her productivity is the help of research specialist Kevin Maloney, a longtime partner. Maloney manages the apple breeding orchards, greenhouse and nursery at Cornell AgriTech and, along with Brown, makes new genetic crosses each year.

"He really is a partner. I respect his opinion and expertise. Sometimes we argue about the merits of



Top, Brown in an apple breeding orchard. Above, Brown and research specialist Kevin Maloney check the fruit.



one variety or another, but we balance each other out,” says Brown. “He prefers more sweet fruit. I prefer more on the tart side. And it’s nice — we get along really well.”

The pair are good friends outside work and in the field, sharing family dinners and countless test bites of crunchy — and sometimes not-so-crunchy — apples. Using cutting-edge techniques, they harness advances in genetics, horticulture and technology to create new and improved apple varieties.

### CREATING AN IDEAL APPLE

New York state has a superior climate for apple breeding, says Brown. “The mixture of warm days and cold nights triggers enhanced apple quality. Our region is known for it. We also have adequate water. With climate change, hotter regions face more challenges such as sunburn.”

Focusing on factors that impact growers — such as disease and disorder resistance — as well as fruit characteristics important to consumers, like enhanced flavor, juiciness, texture and crunch, Cornell’s apple breeders strive for consistency of quality. Scientists can even breed apples for medicinal purposes, including increased vitamin C (an antioxidant) and higher amounts of DHC (dihydrochalcones, which affect blood glucose.)

“You name it, we can try to improve it!” says Brown.

Creating a new apple variety, testing it and preparing it for the commercial market is a painstaking process. Brown says it takes extensive research, experience and intuition to create a new cultivar (a crossed variety of plants selected for desirable traits). Scientific advances help move the process along, but there are always surprises.

“We have molecular markers that allow us to track certain traits to know if a fruit will be resistant to scab, sour, or red-skinned versus yellow, but we need so many more. Genetics and breeding are ruled by complexity, and just when we think we understand something, we learn about other things affecting the trait.”

In 2020, Brown’s program released three promising new apple varieties: Firecracker, Cordera and Pink Luster. Desirable traits like vibrant color, large fruit and disease resistance increased the probability that NY 109, NY 56 and NY 73 (the apples’ patented names, respectively) would be easy for growers to market and manage.

### FAST TRACKING DEVELOPMENT OF NEW VARIETIES

Thanks to advances in the field, the timeframe for developing and releasing a new variety has shortened significantly in recent years.

“At the same time as my program, there was a program (at Cornell) that was developing dwarfing rootstocks. What that does is it provides a root system that’s adapted to a number of things, and it also controls the size of the trees,” explains Brown.

Dwarfing rootstocks are why you may see orchards that look more like sticks rather than trees, she says. They also help breeders fast-track research and development of new varieties by reducing the amount of time it takes to produce apples that can be sampled and analyzed.



### A UNIQUE NEW YORK COLLABORATION

While Cornell’s most recent apple releases are available to any growers, one pair of high-performing apples is marketed under a unique cooperative program exclusively for New York farmers.

“Crunch Time Apple Growers is a group of growers that join together to market new apple varieties developed at Cornell,” says the cooperative’s Executive Director Jessica Wells.

Founded in 2009 with a small group of four

Top, a SnapDragon apple. Above, promoting SnapDragon apples at a Buffalo Bills game.





Above, a RubyFrost apple. Left, Susan Brown with a colleague at the Cornell AgriTech agriculture and food research center in Geneva, NY.

growers, Crunch Time now has 156 participating members. The collective is dedicated to just two apple varieties: NY 1 and NY 2, known commercially as SnapDragon and RubyFrost. Brown, Maloney and their team created both popular varieties and quickly realized they had at least one apple with star appeal. “In the case of SnapDragon, the first time Kevin and I tasted one, we really felt we had a winner,” says Brown.

RubyFrost, touted as “colorful, crisp and craveable,” tastes similar to Granny Smith. Its anti-browning properties make it an excellent option for charcuterie boards, and superior flavor retention makes the variety a good candidate for baking and cooking, says Wells. SnapDragon, marketed under the tagline “monster crunch,” is sweet, juicy and crunchy, with a hint of spice, and is ideal for snacking. According to Brown, SnapDragon appeals to Honeycrisp fans but has fewer growing challenges.

Promising trials and the availability of dwarfing rootstocks helped to fast-track the breeding process of the new variety.

“In the past, if a seedling was on its own roots or was on a bigger rootstock, it could take eight to 12 years before the first fruit occurred. In the case of NY 1, we got the first fruit in four years. With every step, we were cutting time out. That’s why it was only 11 years from cross to commercialization.”

Brown says SnapDragon set an industry development record. RubyFrost, which was developed in 18 years, was another record breaker.

The novel partnership between Cornell’s apple breeding program, Crunch Time Apple Growers and New York farmers improves the local economy and elevates appreciation for New York-grown apples worldwide.

“Both varieties are being commercialized internationally and winning awards,” says Brown.

### **CRUNCH TIME & THE BUFFALO BILLS = A WINNING TEAM**

In August 2022, Crunch Time Apple Growers signed a four-year marketing partnership agreement with the Buffalo Bills, making SnapDragon the team’s official apple. Brand recognition has increased tremendously over the past two seasons, says Wells. She estimates last years’ sales were up around 30% in Western New York.

Bills fan awareness has also soared.

“It went from the first game last season when the partnership was brand new, and people saying, ‘What are you trying to give me? Why would I want an apple?’ to people literally seeking us out. Buffalo has a huge fan base all over the country. That’s been super helpful in spreading the word,” Wells says.

### **NEW YORK APPLES: THE STORY CONTINUES**

Cornell continues to develop new apples, and Brown is writing a book, “Creating an Apple,” about her experiences in the field. In the meantime, enjoy these resources.





Brown works with a graduate student at the Cornell AgriTech center.



## WHERE TO SAMPLE AND PICK NEW YORK APPLES

- » Use the New York Apple Association search tool:  
[applesfromny.com/find-apples](http://applesfromny.com/find-apples)
- » On the Cornell University campus:  
Visit the apple vending machine in the lobby of Mann Library
- » Take the Wayne County Apple Tasting Tour in October:  
[appletastingtour.com](http://appletastingtour.com)
- » To find a Crunch Time retailer or farm market  
(call ahead for availability) near you, visit:  
[snapdragonapple.com](http://snapdragonapple.com) and [rubyfrostapple.com](http://rubyfrostapple.com)
- » Crunch Time Apple Growers in Central New York (call ahead  
to confirm seasonal availability): Abbott Farms, Baldwinsville:  
Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards, LaFayette: Clearview Farms, Tully:  
Navarino Orchard, Syracuse: and Otisco Orchards, Marietta
- » Crunch Time Retail Partners in Central New York:  
Aldi, Price Chopper, Tops Friendly Markets and Wegmans



# SOBER SIPS

BY BECCA TAURISANO



**Note:**  
Beverages labeled  
non-alcoholic  
can have traces  
of alcohol from  
the fermentation  
process, less than  
0.5% ABV.





**WHETHER YOU ARE  
SERIOUSLY SOBER OR  
JUST WANT TO PACE  
YOURSELF, EXPLORE  
SOME NON-ALCOHOLIC  
BEVERAGES THIS  
SUMMER AND BEYOND**



The United States is in the midst of a cultural drinking shift, with an estimated 41% of Americans choosing to drink less alcohol in 2024, according to a recent survey by NCS Solutions. There is a generational component to this trend as well, with large numbers of Gen Z leading the charge. Several bars and restaurants in our area are opening up a world of choices for non-drinkers by offering non-alcoholic beers, wines or spirits and mixing up delicious, creative mocktails that rival the high-octane versions.

Consumers of non-alcoholic drinks fall into one of three categories: *Sober Serious*: non-drinkers; *Sober Sometimes*: designated drivers, participating in Dry January, pregnant or trying to get pregnant, or those with health concerns about alcohol; and *Sober Curious*: those who are checking out what it is like to socialize without alcohol. Sober curious was first coined by author Ruby Warrington in 2018, providing a term for the movement and a way for new non-drinkers to express themselves.

Opposite, the NOgroni at Three Lives Bar. Above, a bartender at Emerald Cocktail Kitchen mixes up a non-alcoholic drink.





People are choosing to drink less for a variety of reasons and not always because of alcohol use disorder (typically referred to as alcoholism). Some reasons for drinking less include improving physical or mental health and saving money. Sober curious people may also choose to drink mindfully, by moderating their intake and alternating alcohol drinks with something non-alcoholic to avoid overdoing it.

According to mental health private practice owner, Barb Shepard, LMHC, there is an undeniable connection between alcohol consumption and anxiety and depression. Drinking alcohol depletes the neurotransmitters in the brain and affects sleep patterns, which over time wreaks havoc on your mood. “Younger people are questioning what they are putting into their bodies and they are very interested in their mental health,” she says. “They have cracked the code that you cannot binge drink every weekend and feel great. If you are trying to be less anxious and less depressed, then [consuming] less alcohol goes along with that. The trend they are setting changes the conversation for the greater cultural norms and what people view as acceptable.”

Groups like Guerilla Gay Events (GGE) in Syracuse recognize the need to include alcohol-free options at their gatherings. GGE, which started in 2018 as Guerilla Gay Bar and expanded their programming to include Guerilla Gay Cafe in 2022, hosts pop-up events for the LGBTQ+ community at bars and cafes with an element of surprise, as the location is not announced until the day of.

Acknowledging that some attendees might be abstaining from alcohol, GGE includes information about the non-alcoholic beverages that will be available ahead of their Thursday evening bar events. The cafe events on Sunday afternoons are completely centered around the absence of alcohol. These events were created in part for non-drinkers, but also to provide another opportunity for attendees to gather outside the work week.

GGE co-organizer Ariel Servadio says offering these options for attendees is part of making everyone feel included. “For so long the thought has been, having fun equals drinking alcohol. We wanted to make sure that people who choose not to drink are still welcome.”

Sam Castleberry is an attendee of both GGE bar and cafe events. Castleberry stopped drinking in 2007 and has noticed the shift in our drinking culture since then. “There is a new culture surrounding alcohol and those of us who are choosing not to drink. It is no longer considered bizarre to abstain from alcohol,” he says. One major change is in the language we use surrounding alcohol abstinence. “Now there is a way for people to say, ‘I’m just choosing not to drink,’ which feels less stigmatizing.”

The amount of choice in the non-alcoholic beverage space is remarkable. Non-alcoholic brewers like Athletic Brewing Company and Industrial Arts Brewing Company are capturing the craft beer audience and drilling down to specific flavor profiles like IPAs, hazys, sours, pilsners and stouts. For wine enthusiasts, non-alcoholic bottled wines from Giesen and Buzzkill’s canned wines are convenient and offer portion control.

Hop water is carbonated water flavored with hops, the primary ingredient in brewing beer, giving it a crisp and refreshing taste. Breweries like Ommegang in Cooperstown, Sierra Nevada and Lagunitas offer hop waters; California brand HOP WTR can be found in any Wegmans grocery store.

Mood-enhancing drinks from brands like Hiyo and Curious Elixirs are infused with nootropics and adaptogens: plants that enhance cognitive function and help the body cope with stress. These drinks can help you unwind without the presence of alcohol; examples of ingredients include ashwagandha, holy basil, ginseng and turmeric. These are separate from seltzers that include THC or CBD, which are also considered alcohol-free options.

To create mocktails, mixologists can also employ a range of non-alcoholic spirits from labels like Ritual Zero Proof, which is sold in a handful of stores around CNY. Their spirits mimic the flavor profiles of traditional spirits like gin, whiskey and rum in order to create delicious drinks.

David Weakley, creator of Instagram account CuseAF (in this case, AF means Alcohol Free), seeks out non-alcoholic options in Syracuse and highlights bars and restaurants who offer plenty of choice for non-drinkers. He stopped drinking in December 2022 and launched his Instagram early in 2023.



“There is a new culture surrounding alcohol and those of us who are choosing not to drink. It is no longer considered bizarre to abstain from alcohol.”

Sam Castleberry

Weakley envisions a world where non-alcoholic options are part of the conversation for everyone, sober or not. “I would love to see the dialogue shift to bar owners and bartenders providing recommendations for beer, wine and non-alcoholic options right up front to everyone,” he says. His goal is to see Syracuse get to the point where it is recognized as one of the best cities for non-alcoholic options. “I am finding the bars around here are really open to the non-alcoholic movement and they are having fun with it.”

Establishments like Emerald Cocktail Kitchen on Tipperary Hill provide extensive mocktail menus for customers to choose from. This past May, Emerald Cocktail Kitchen hosted its first alcohol-free event to provide a safe space for customers, some of whom may be early in their recovery from alcohol use, to socialize while abstaining. The event was held in partnership with Safe Space CNY, ACR Health and CuseAF in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month.

“We always have a few mocktails on the menu and we try to mirror our cocktail list as closely as possible,” says Emerald Cocktail Kitchen co-owner Michele Roesch. Roesch, who co-owns the establishment with her mother, Nora, is alcohol free and so is one of her managers. Emerald Cocktail Kitchen has the area’s first rooftop bar, a popular spot in the summer months.

“It is a very environmentally driven space. We want all of our customers to be able to enjoy themselves here, so we make sure to provide options for everyone,” she says.

The 443 Social Club & Lounge has offered mocktails for a few years but owners Jimmy and Julie Leone felt the options were not that exciting. This past spring, the Leones incorporated new syrups and flavored bitters to help revamp their mocktail menu. “We were trying to come up with drinks with more depth and complexity, not just fizzy juice concoctions,” says Julie Leone. “We wanted them to taste more like real cocktails.”

As a live music venue in Syracuse, 443 Social Club & Lounge often hosts touring musical artists who are living sober and the Leones wanted to cater to their needs. “We are seeing similar trends with our guests,” says Leone. “Even folks who aren’t eschewing booze completely are sometimes alternating [an alcoholic] drink with a non-alcoholic option throughout the night.”

Regardless of your approach, the good news is not drinking no longer means not socializing. With more establishments recognizing the need for non-alcoholic options for their patrons, the amount of choice is encouraging. “You used to have to live with absence,” says Castleberry. “With this turn we are experiencing toward more non-alcoholic options, it is less about absence and more about inclusion.”



PHOTOS BY AMELIA BEAMISH

Athletic Beer, which is sold at many local bars, provided samples at Emerald Cocktail Kitchen’s Dry Day.







Opposite, the Sage Beekeeper and Mango Marg from Emerald Cocktail Kitchen's Dry Day. This page, below, dirty sodas from CopperTop. Right, The Brewster Inn's Strawberry Mint Lemonade.



## GET A DRINK

These establishments have bubbled up to the forefront locally, dedicating significant space on their drink menu to non-alcoholic options.

### **The Brewster Inn, Cazenovia**

Seasonal offerings this summer include a Prickly Pear Soda with prickly pear puree, soda, fresh lime juice and cane syrup; a Blackberry Mule with ginger beer, muddled blackberries and lime; and Strawberry Mint Lemonade with fresh strawberry puree, strawberry mint syrup, soda and lemonade. Non-alcoholic beers and hop waters are also available.

### **Emerald Cocktail Kitchen, Syracuse**

One of their most popular mocktails is the Earl Grey & Ginger, a tantalizing mix of Earl Grey tea, simple syrup, lemon juice and ginger beer. Guests can also find alcohol-free versions of classic cocktails like cosmopolitans and espresso martinis, plus non-alcoholic beer from Athletic Brewing. This summer they plan to expand their offerings to include mood-enhancing beverages from Curious Elixirs, non-alcoholic wines and hop waters.

### **The 443 Social Club & Lounge, Syracuse**

A lengthy mocktail menu includes a Safe Sex on the Beach with orange, cranberry and peach flavors and bitters; an Apple Pie Mock Mule served in a copper mug with a fresh apple slice and a cinnamon stick; and a Chili Lime Pineapple Fizz made with muddled jalapenos and a Tajín rim. Non-alcoholic beers include several varieties from Athletic Brewing and non-alcoholic Guinness Stout.

### **Tallman Cocktail Club, Syracuse**

Four permanent mocktails on the menu feature non-alcoholic spirits: Passion and the Opera with Seedlip Grove 42 spirit, passion fruit-vanilla syrup, lime and egg white; Le Pêche Mode with Ritual Zero Proof Whiskey, peach puree and Pointless lime ginger ale; Bittersweet Symphony with Ritual Zero Proof Aperitif, strawberry-rose syrup and sparkling water; and the Margarit-O with Ritual Zero Proof Tequila, lime juice, orange, agave and a salt rim. Additionally, they offer brews from Athletic and Pointless ginger beer.

### **Harvey's Garden, Syracuse**

The popular beer hall and food truck park offers canned beverages, like choices from Athletic Brewing and hop waters, in a regular rotation. Any item off their cocktail menu can be transformed into a mocktail with Ritual Zero Proof spirits. The venue is both kid and pet friendly, which makes it a nice option for families.

### **LM Social, Syracuse**

In addition to three non-alcoholic beers on the menu, creative mocktail options include the Limoncello Spritz with fresh lemon, agave, sparkling mineral water and a rosemary garnish; a Phoney Negroni, with ginger ale, grapefruit juice, orange juice and grenadine; and a Topo Chico Homeros with sparkling water and exotic fruit simple syrup, topped with a flaming orange.





### **The Evergreen, Syracuse**

With three mocktails and a selection of non-alcoholic beers from Athletic in regular rotation, The Evergreen is a top spot for non-drinkers. Mocktails include their Lavender Lemonade, with house-made lavender syrup, fresh lemon juice and water; a Mock-Mojito with mint, lime juice, simple syrup and soda; and the Strawberry Ginger, with strawberry coulis, ginger beer and soda.

### **Three Lives, Syracuse**

E-sports enthusiasts can sip on a selection of alcohol-free mocktails while they level up at the video game-themed spot. The Shirley Templar is a mix of house-made grenadine and ginger ale served in a coupe glass; the Beam Cannon blends pineapple juice, cranberry and lemon-lime soda with a maraschino cherry and orange peel garnish; and the NOgroni mixes Lyre's non-alcoholic spirits Apertif Rosso, Italian Orange and Dry London with sphere ice and a lemon twist.

### **Crazy Daisies, Syracuse**

The Garden Cafe at Crazy Daisies uses fruits and herbs from their own garden or local farms whenever possible and makes simple syrups in house. Offerings include the Strawberry Basil Lemonade, made with strawberry, fresh lemon juice, basil and club soda; the Pineapple Sage Smash, with pineapple, lime and fresh lemon juice; and the Blueberry Thyme Fizz with blueberries, orange juice, fresh lemon juice, ginger beer, thyme and orange bitters. All mocktails are topped with edible floral garnishes.



### **CopperTop Tavern, North Syracuse, Camillus, Vestal**

All three locations offer six non-alcoholic drinks on their Mocktails & Dirty Sodas menu, including the Ginger Honey Mocktail, a combination of ginger beer, honey simple syrup and lemonade; Lavender Lemonade, fresh lemon juice shaken with lavender simple syrup; and Sweet Shirley, a combination of Starry (lemon-lime soda), grenadine, coconut cream and cherries. Non-alcoholic beers from Athletic Brewing are also available.

### **A.W. Wander, Manlius**

Athletic Brewing's Run Wild is on draft all summer long, giving non-drinkers the option to enjoy a crisp, cold beer straight from the tap. Additional offerings include sour beers from Urban Artifact and brews like the Italian-style pilsner from Untitled Art. For drinkers who are part of the California sober movement — abstaining from alcohol but not marijuana — THC/CBD-infused seltzers from Ayrloom by Beak & Skiff and Cycling Frog can be enjoyed at the bar or taken home in six packs. Mango-flavored hop water from EverHop is a refreshing option and the bar plans to offer other flavors throughout the season.

### **Brian's Landing, Jamesville**

Bartenders use fresh, seasonal ingredients to craft their mocktail menu, which offers drinks such as the Cucumber Mint Cooler (muddled cucumber, fresh mint, agave and coconut water), the Guava Mojito (Ritual Zero Proof Rum, mint, guava, simple syrup, lime and club soda) and the Watermelon Sugar (muddled watermelon, Ritual Zero Proof Tequila, agave, and lemon and lime juices). At least one non-alcoholic beer is available as well.



**Prison City Pub & Brewery, Auburn**  
*and Lake Placid (coming Summer 2024)*

Available non-alcoholic beers from Athletic Brewing, like golden ale Upside Dawn, and craft sodas from Ithaca Beer and Saranac vary by location. This summer, they are opening a speakeasy-style cocktail lounge in the basement of the original pub on State Street, featuring some funky, out-of-the-box mocktails like the Lychee Lemonade Refresher with lychee, lemon and mint. This year, in conjunction with Dry January, they created non-alcoholic test batches of their brews, like the ever-popular Mass Riot, and hope to see NA versions of their beers make a more permanent return to the lineup in 2025.

**The Krebs, Skaneateles**

On the “Taking It Easy” non-alcoholic part of the drink menu, find beverages Ginger 75, with ginger, lemon juice, orange juice and soda; the Spring Delight with strawberry, basil, lemon and ginger ale; and the Firecracker with seasonal sorbet, jalapeno chutney, lime and agave. They also have Heineken Zero non-alcoholic beer.

**The Rooftop Lounge, Oswego**

Alcohol-free beverages are listed first, ensuring that non-drinkers feel welcome as they peruse the menu, which includes four non-alcoholic beers from Athletic Brewing and an alcohol-free rosé wine from Déluré. Try a Spicy Pineapple Mango Mockarita with pineapple juice, Monin mango concentrate, spicy agave, lemon and lime juices with a Tajín rim and grilled pineapple garnish. The Strawberry Kiwi Nojito features Monin kiwi syrup, Sprite, muddled strawberries, lime and mint with a lime wheel and strawberry garnishes, and the Mixed Berry Light & Stormy includes housemade mixed berry simple syrup, muddled limes and ginger beer.

**Willow Rock Brewing, Syracuse**

The brewery provides a choice of at least three to five non-alcoholic brews year round. Brews they typically carry include Athletic Brewing’s Cerveza Atlética, Run Wild IPA, Upside Dawn golden ale and wheat beer Wit’s Peak. From Partake Brewing in Canada, they offer a blonde, an IPA and a sour.



Opposite, Crazy Daisies’ pineapple sage smash and strawberry basil lemonade, and a cucumber mint cooler from Brian’s Landing. This page, clockwise from top, The Rooftop Lounge’s Strawberry Kiwi Nojito, Hop Water from Ommegang and Three Lives’ Beam Cannon.





CONGO  
Vietnam  
FRANCE

Jamaica  
Dominican Republic  
Ecuador

Laos  
Myanmar

HONDURAS  
Haiti

Bhutan  
Oneida Indian Nation  
Cambodia

IRAQ  
Trinidad

Sudan  
UKRAINE





# UTICA'S GOT TASTE

An overview of the city's diverse culinary landscape

BY KAILA CHAMPOUX

PHOTOS BY VINTAGE JUNEBUG PHOTOGRAPHY

Utica, the city that “starts with you,” is a multicultural hub built by hard-working locals, immigrants and refugees from across the globe. With over 42 languages spoken, its diverse population has cultivated a rich tapestry of culinary delights. Whether you're a visitor or a resident, Utica's food scene promises something for everyone, from grab-and-go to gourmet. Comprising long-time touchstones and newer entries on the scene, we know this is not an exhaustive list of eateries, but we hope you will use it to begin an epicurean adventure in a city that holds food at its heart.



Opposite, directional signs in downtown Utica highlight countries where residents came from. Above, a bronze relief mural at Nostro Restobar and Lounge follows the path of the Erie Canal.

PHOTO THIS PAGE BY JARED PAVENTI





The dining area at Yummilicious Cafe & Bakery features velvet chairs and neon signs.

## EAST UTICA

### **Napoli's Italian Bakery and Roma Sausage and Deli**

The local argument around the Tomato Pie, a Utica staple, generally has to do with one's preference for sweet or savory sauce. Grab a pie at Napoli's Italian Bakery and Roma Sausage and Deli to see which flavor you prefer. Tomato pie is not a dessert, but rather a type of pizza where fresh-baked dough is formed into a square-shaped pie — producing a thick crust when cooked — topped with marinara sauce and perfected by a sprinkling of pecorino Romano cheese. Slices are cut in squares and served at room temperature. Be sure to get there early or order ahead, as this is a coveted delicacy for many Uticans. Both shops stock fresh bread, imported and domestic cheeses, a selection of meats, olives and other Italian goodies. Napoli's also offers a variety of stuffed breads, while Roma makes sausage and bread daily.

*Napoli's Italian Bakery, 412 Culver Ave., 315-798-8709, search Napoli's Italian Bakery on Facebook*

*Roma Sausage & Deli, 2029 Bleecker St., 315-792-1445, romasausageanddeli.com*

### **Marr-Logg House**

Marr-Logg House, a classic American breakfast and brunch joint established over 50 years ago, serves breakfast all day. The straight-forward menu offers favorites like eggs, omelets (ask about the giambotti), pancakes, French toast or Belgian waffles. Lunch options like grilled cheese, burgers, specialty sandwiches, salads and desserts are available. In 2022, October 17 was declared Marr-Logg Day in Oneida County to mark the day the restaurant first opened in 1972. Sit at the counter, a booth or a table for the down-home diner ambiance, or take out your order.

*1130 Culver Ave., 315-797-7730, search Marr-Logg House on Facebook*

### **Yummilicious Cafe & Bakery**

If you head to Yummilicious Cafe & Bakery for lunch or dinner, save room for the pastries. The owners came from Bosnia, so in addition to pavlova, tres leches and a number of decadent cakes, the dessert case features Balkan and Turkish desserts like baklava, tulumba, čupavci and hurmašica. Gluten-free dessert and halal food options are available; brunch is served on the weekend. Pair your food with hot or iced drinks, including fancy creations such as the Cinnamon Toast Crunch Latte (a shot of Lavazza espresso mixed with cinnamon toast syrup, ice and milk and topped with cinnamon sweet cream). The trendy cafe features faux-floral walls, or you can sit out on the patio under the whimsical display of colorful umbrellas.

*1600 Rutger St., 315-864-3197, facebook.com/yummiliciouscakesanddesserts*

### **Sunny**

Sunny is a quaint restaurant that combines Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Japanese cuisine. They serve satisfying homemade crowd favorites like Pad Thai, pho (pronounced fuh) and Nime Chow (fresh spring rolls), plus more eclectic dishes such as Cambodian Farmer Soup with pickled lotus root, and what Sunny calls "Strange Flavor" — a tangy, spicy Chinese barbecue sauce with Chinese black mushrooms, other vegetables and choice of protein. Lunch specials and vegetarian selections are available on the extensive menu which includes soups, noodle dishes and some extra spicy options for dine in or take out.

*530 Albany St., 315-292-7034, facebook.com/sunnyrestaurantasiancuisine*



### Florentine Pastry Shop and Caruso's Pastry Shop

Transport yourself to a simpler time at Florentine Pastry Shop, in business since 1928, and Caruso's Pastry Shop, in business since 1958. Delight in old-world Italian pastries and cakes like Pasticciotti (pusties), Sfogliatelle, Cassata (a traditional Italian cheesecake served at Eastertime with chocolate and cherries) and cannoli. While you're at either shop, order yourself a beautiful cake or cookie tray for your next special event. Florentine has a small seating area with vintage ice cream parlor chairs for you to sit back, sip a coffee, sample a few pastries and take in the nostalgic atmosphere. At Caruso's, take your espresso or cappuccino to go, "Italy style."

*Florentine Pastry Shop, 667 Bleecker St., 315-724-8032, florentinepastry.com*

*Caruso's Pastry Shop, 707 Bleecker St., 315-735-9712, facebook.com/carusopastryshop*

### Giuseppe's Bakery

At Giuseppe's, freshly made bread, tomato pie, anisette cookies and other classic Italian cookies fill the shelves. During the Christmas season, stock up on pignolata (small balls of fried dough dipped in honey and topped with sprinkles). Open since 1983, the bakery is known for its seven flavors of pusties — the pastry is even part of their logo.

*506 Mohawk St., 315-735-6750*

### Avico Distributing

To bring the flavors of Utica home with you, head to this retail store inside a warehouse. You'll find Italian staples like Utica Grind crushed red pepper, Falatico's Italian Sausage, grated cheeses and several frozen prepared items like ravioli.

*729 Broad St., 315-724-8243, avicospice.com*



### Ventura's

Over the past 81 years, the staff at family-owned and -operated Ventura's has seen many sports legends — Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra and Rocky Marciano, to name a few — enjoy a meal while seated in the dining room's vintage pink leather chairs. Here, diners choose unbeatable braciole, pasta slathered with the restaurant's famous marinara sauce and other Italian specialties like Utica greens, manicotti, veal parmesan, fried calamari, roasted peppers, eggplant parmesan, shrimp scampi and more from an impressive menu. The second and third generation continue the old-school fine dining experience, and in 2006 began bottling their marinara for sale.

*787 Lansing St., 315-732-8381, venturas-restaurant.com*

### Trattoria Calabria

If you're feeling adventurous, make a reservation (call one to two weeks ahead) at Trattoria Calabria. There is only one seating per week, at 6 p.m. on Saturday, and there is no menu to review in advance. Sit back and relax as the chef owner, Danny Corriero, cooks a seemingly endless supply of generously portioned Italian food served family style in a cozy dining room that feels like it could be your Nonna's. BYOB, if you please. This special experience is a flat rate per person and the establishment accepts cash only.

*706 Culver Ave., 315-724-0019*

### The Willows

The owner of new-American fusion restaurant The Willows invites you to try something a little different with his spin on classic dishes. Appetizers include fried artichoke hearts, coquilles, mussels and two styles of greens. Savor entrees such as chicken or veal Francaise, pan-seared duck breast or vegetarian risotto, and conclude with dessert: the small selection usually includes a style of cheesecake, pies and a crème brulee. The restaurant makes its own ice creams and sorbets, as well. Take out is available.

*900 Culver Ave., 315-765-0271, willowsoutica.com*

### O'Scugnizzo Pizzeria

O'Scugnizzo Pizzeria, founded in 1914, is the second-oldest pizzeria in the country. They are most known for their upside down-style pie — pizza with the cheese before the sauce — plus they have regular pizza with all the toppings, salads, pasta, wings, subs and other deep-fried delights. They offer weekly lunch specials like their Friday fish fry. You can dine in or take out. In 2022, the shop was featured on Barstool Sports' "One Bite Pizza Reviews" series and received a very favorable rating, scoring the highest out of the CNY spots reviewed. The shop ships pizza within the continental U.S.

*614 Bleecker St., 315-732-6149, uticapizza.com*

Photos of past wedding cakes at Florentine Pastry Shop.



## UPTOWN (SOUTH UTICA)

### **Slice Pizzeria**

Slice Pizzeria is popular for hand-tossed thin-crust pizzas, specialty slices and signature Purple Cow chicken wings that are deep fried, grilled, marinated and then drenched in a tangy, sweet and savory concoction. Order these wings “All the Way” and they’ll be tossed in everything sauce, garnished with crispy bacon, green onions and drizzled with ranch. Slice is take-out or counter standing room only. Dave Portnoy rated the crispy thin slice of cheese pizza he tried second-best in CNY during his 2022 “One Bite Pizza Reviews” visit.

2007 Genesee St., 315-507-3197, [sliceutica.com](http://sliceutica.com)

## DOWNTOWN

### **Nostro Restobar and Lounge**

Dine in style at Nostro Restobar and Lounge, located in the former Oneida National Bank building. Taste top-notch contemporary Italian cuisine served family style, such as carbonara with guanciale, pecorino Romano and a slow poached egg, or entrees such as herb-grilled salmon served with roasted scallion, olive oil, herbs and Brussels sprouts. Vegetarian options and gluten-free substitutions are available. Sit at the 50-foot bar and ogle the three-dimensional bronze relief map, original to the bank, that depicts the local area. The drinks list includes several Italian wines and cleverly named cocktails like Mistaken Identity, a black raspberry margarita, and The Gabagool, a whiskey sour punch.

268 Genesee St., 315-735-2583, [nostrorestobar.com](http://nostrorestobar.com)

### **Happy Feet Caribbean**

Happy Feet Caribbean serves up fresh and authentic Caribbean-American cuisine like oxtail, curry goat, rasta pasta and jerk chicken. Catch an ocean vibe when you add a bottle of tropical-flavored juice or lemonade. The decor in the dining area, inspired by the Jamaican flag, is simple and bright. One wall features Utica Club images and advertisements. Takeout is available.

37 Devereux St., 315-733-0272,  
[search Happy Feet Caribbean Cuisine on Facebook](#)

### **Golden’s**

Located inside the narrow part of the photo-famous flatiron Carlisle Building, built in 1884, is a tiny café with counter seating. Golden’s is a one-man show that serves a full English breakfast, crepes, omelets and yogurt bowls, plus burgers, sandwiches such as prime rib, a caprese and several takes on a Delmonico steak sandwich in case you’re in the mood for lunch. There are inventive combinations such as corn bread bubble waffles with sweet and savory toppings and check out vegan Fridays. Jazz music sets the mood as you eat.

244 Genesee St., 315-507-6931,  
[goldensfoodllc.wixsite.com/goldens](http://goldensfoodllc.wixsite.com/goldens)



Specialty slices at Slice include the Chicken Riggie and Double Covered Roni.

### **Knead to Eat Bakery and Café**

For breakfast, brunch, lunch and pastries, visit Knead to Eat Bakery and Café in Franklin Square. Indulge in the colorful macarons, cream puffs, cupcakes and scones. Their menu also boasts breakfast burritos and tacos, pancakes, lots of caffeinated beverages and sweet crepes full of fruit. At lunchtime, enjoy salads, soups and sandwiches. The cozy café is open seven days a week and is often packed on weekends.

53 Franklin St., 315-864-8742,  
[facebook.com/kneadbakeryandcafe](https://facebook.com/kneadbakeryandcafe)

### **Rooster’s**

See what everyone is crowing about at Rooster’s. This small, casual joint has a simple but delicious menu specializing in smashed burgers and chopped cheese sandwiches (the beef and cheese are incorporated together while on the grill) topped with flavorful condiments like caramelized onions and fig jam, all on bread that is baked fresh daily. The chicken nuggets, fries and weekly specials are also worth a stop. Dine in or take out, but don’t forget the tangy Rooster sauce — they also have bottles of the sauce for sale.

814 Charlotte St., 315-880-4645, [facebook.com/roosters315](https://facebook.com/roosters315)

### **Nanabi Café**

Order ahead for pick up at Nanabi Café, an Asian Fusion take-out restaurant with a modern city vibe. This spot is known for its bento boxes, bao buns and other comfort food inspired by Asian street food. Nanabi also has a variety of slushies, bubble teas, milk teas and fruit teas to quench your thirst.

106 Bleecker St., 315-864-8379, [nanabiutica.com](http://nanabiutica.com)



### **Court Vue Luncheonette**

For breakfast or lunch, check out the aptly named Court Vue Luncheonette located directly across from the Oneida County Courthouse. Find classic American fare, wraps, sandwiches and traditional breakfast at this no-frills family-owned restaurant, with take-out or sit-down options, which has been in business for nearly 40 years. Daily specials are offered Monday through Friday.

219 Elizabeth St., 315-732-0580, [facebook.com/courtvue lunch](https://facebook.com/courtvue lunch)

### **Mi Casa Restaurant**

With an interior that's reminiscent of a beachside tiki bar, transport yourself to the Caribbean at Mi Casa Restaurant. The Oneida Square eatery makes homecooked Caribbean and Dominican dishes, like their specialty Pechuga del Valle, a chicken breast stuffed with sweet plantains and mozzarella, covered in a cheese sauce and accompanied by a yucca puree. Have a sangria with an order of mofongos, seafood dishes, stuffed peppers and chimi Dominicano, Dominican-style hamburgers.

1315 Genesee St., 315-864-3057,  
[facebook.com/micasarestaurantutica](https://facebook.com/micasarestaurantutica)

### **Ancora!**

Situated next to the Stanley Theatre, fine dining establishment Ancora! is a popular dinner choice before a show. This Mediterranean/Italian restaurant offers tapas like bruschetta and arancini, and generously portioned entrees such as their signature paella. For dessert, try one of their many delectable crepes or tiramisu. Dine indoors and peek into the open kitchen or soak up the sun on their sidewalk patio. Sip a signature cocktail at the custom-designed bar and admire works by a local artist on the walls.

261 Genesee St., 315-724-4815, [ancorautica.com](https://ancorautica.com)

### **mōtus**

mōtus, an American gastropub, provides a memorable experience that boasts creatively crafted menus that change with the seasons and incorporate fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Recent entrees include an asparagus-and-Jones Family Farm chevre galette with local honey and Roman artichoke, and a cauliflower steak with sage bechamel, farro and braised kale. Order from the a la carte menu or take your time with the courses on the prix fixe menu. Polish off your meal with housemade sorbet or flourless chocolate torte.

234 Genesee St., 315-624-9090, [motusutica.com](https://motusutica.com)

### **Lotus Garden**

Step into a tranquil environment at the family-owned and -operated Lotus Garden, which serves Southeast Asian cuisine drawn from homemade recipes from Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. Enjoy sushi, stir-fry noodles and rice bowls. You can order beer, wine or cocktails from the bar. Try a chef's special like Amok, the national dish of Cambodia, with a choice of fish or chicken in mild yellow curry with coconut milk, aromatic herbs and spices, served with a side of jasmine rice. The restaurant often features live music.

1011 King St., 315-798-8897, [lotusutica.com](https://lotusutica.com)

### **Craylee's**

Visit cozy Craylee's for a bountiful breakfast of comfort foods like Giambotta — scrambled eggs with sausage, potato, greens, onions, sweet and hot peppers topped with melted mozzarella and served with toast — or one of Barb's Veggie Skillets with three scrambled eggs, broccoli, mushrooms, tomatoes, sweet peppers and potatoes topped with cheddar (there's a meat version, too). Don't forget to order Mickey Mouse-shaped pancakes for the kids. Later in the day, try a buffalo chicken sandwich, Reuben or a hamburger hot off the grill.

237 Bleecker St., 315-507-4713, [facebook.com/craylees](https://facebook.com/craylees)

### **Joseph Putrello Coffee**

Stir up something sweet at Joseph Putrello Coffee. This swanky metropolitan café serves authentic Italian drinks such as Vienna Coffee, and other hot and cold options like caramelloccinos, cappuccinos, lattes and the uno dolce, an indulgent creation with espresso, ice cream, San Pellegrino sparkling water, choice of caramel or chocolate sauce, and fresh whipped cream. Pair your drink with a panini or dessert and bask in the sunlight streaming through the window wall.

268 Genesee St., 315-790-6719, [josephputrellocoffee.com](https://josephputrellocoffee.com)

### **Iconic**

Head to Iconic, located inside the historic Hotel Utica (now DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Utica) for a clubby setting with a comfortable lounge area and blue-and-grey-clad dining room. Sip an artisan cocktail, bourbon (smoked, if preferred) or wine beneath large portraits of luminaries from the past who stayed at the hotel, then settle into a high-backed upholstered booth as you enjoy chicken riggies, angry calamari, haddock balsamico or vegetarian options. Don't miss the restored Art Deco lobby for a photo-op right before you enter the restaurant.

102 Lafayette St., 315-316-0926, [iconicutica.com](https://iconicutica.com)





### **Ocean Blue Restaurant & Oyster Bar**

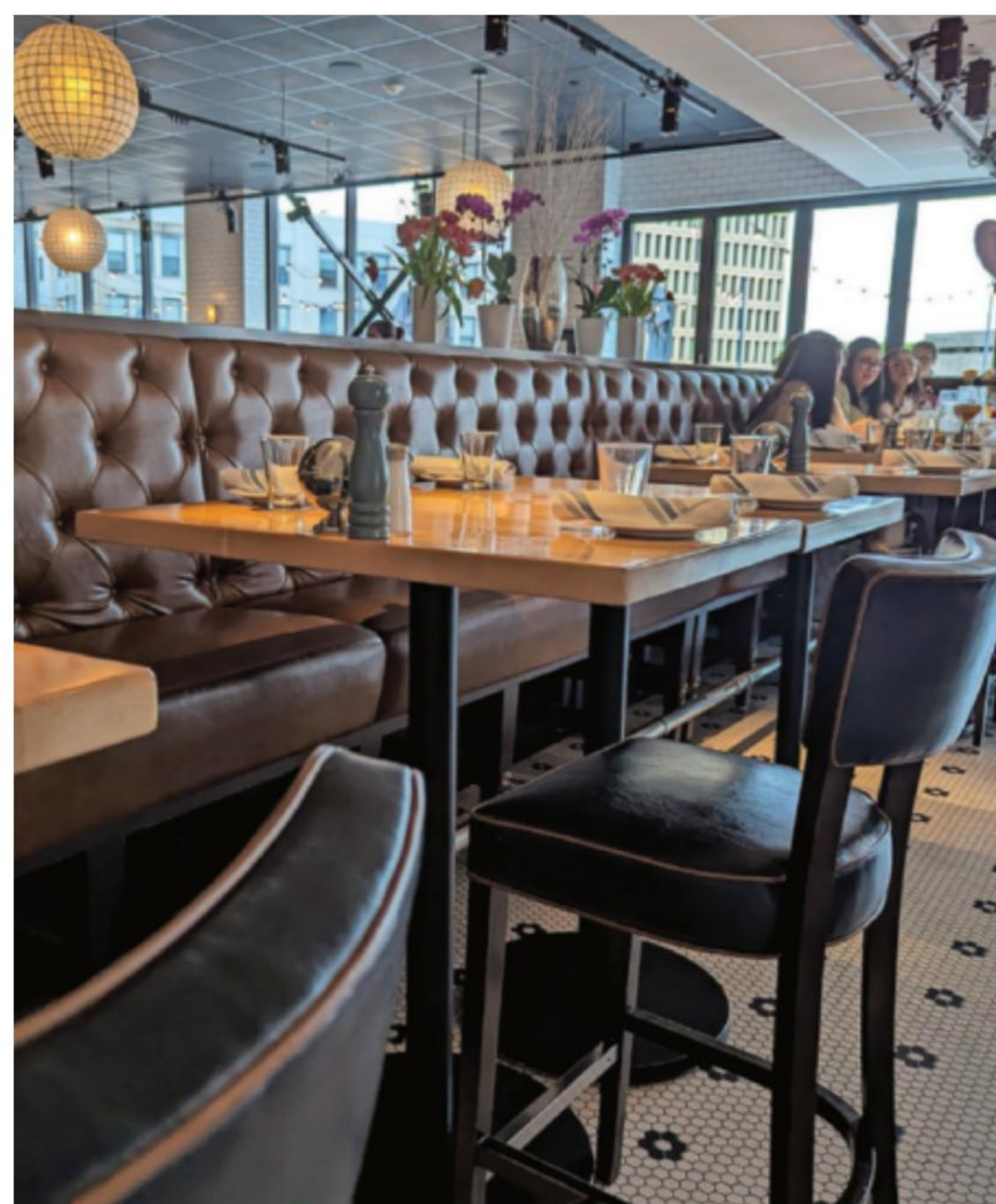
Ocean Blue Restaurant & Oyster Bar is a fine dining experience located on the top floor of the Landmarc Building. Chefs use local ingredients whenever possible and the seafood-forward menu features specialties like oysters, Faroe Islands Salmon, Chilean Sea Bass and crab cakes. Other entrees include filet mignon and herb-roasted chicken; pair your meal with something from the extensive spirits, beer, wine and cocktail lists. A tight selection of desserts is anchored by a scrumptious butter cake served with vanilla ice cream and berries. An Art Deco influence, sleek tile walls, tufted leather booths, rooftop patio and great views add to the vibe. Reservations are recommended for the all-the-rage Champagne Brunch on Sundays. The restaurant is cash free.

*118 Columbia St., 315-735-2583, [oceanbluerestaurant.com](http://oceanbluerestaurant.com)*

### **Mello's Subs**

Mello's Subs may have a simple menu, but there's nothing pared down about their lip-smacking, jam-packed ham, salami, tuna, bologna, mixed, roast beef, turkey and meatball submarines ranging in size from mini to x-large, topped with whatever condiments you desire. Mello's has a few café tables out front but is mostly takeout. The restaurant is cash only.

*242 Genesee St., 315-735-3137, [search Mellos Subs on Facebook](#)*



Top, the private seating area at Ocean Blue features expansive windows, and above, the main dining room.



## BAGG'S SQUARE

### Gerber's 1933 Tavern

Utica's oldest bar, Gerber's 1933 Tavern, is located in an 1840s brick building that was once a seed warehouse. Gerber's was a speakeasy during Prohibition and was restored to a tavern in 2013. Original décor, bar and fixtures adorn the restaurant. While their food is loosely based off a menu that was found in a drawer of the speakeasy during renovations, they also offer eats like quesadillas, fried bologna with long hot peppers, the Gerber Berger, chicken or shrimp tacos and a great selection of beers. On Thursdays it's open mic night and on Friday nights listen to live music, both with no cover charge.

16 Liberty St., 315-534-4835, [facebook.com/gerbers1933tavern](https://facebook.com/gerbers1933tavern)

### The Tailor and the Cook

In its new home, a former dry goods store from the 19th century, The Tailor and the Cook enjoys expanded bar and dining areas. The gourmet farm-to-table restaurant partners with farms across New York state to bring fresh local ingredients, like cheeses, meats, fruits and vegetables, honeycomb, grains, oils and salt, to diners' tables — see the individual providers on the back of the menu. As you wait for your meal, admire the exposed brick, light fixtures made out of wine staves and pots and pans, hydroponic plant wall and the original tin ceiling. For indoor-outdoor space, request the four-season terrace room with accordion windows and a real wood-burning fireplace. Open seven days a week, reservations are highly recommended for the dining room, but customers interested in the bar or tavern area may walk in.

311 Main St., 315-624-3663, [tailorandthecook.com](https://tailorandthecook.com)

### Utica Coffee Roasting Co.

"Wake the Hell Up" with the neighborhood coffee shop Utica Coffee Roasting Co. Grab your locally roasted coffee hot or cold to go, or have a seat, sip and savor in an industrial-brick atmosphere with retro tunes playing. If homebrewed is more your style, you can purchase beans, grounds or single-serve pods in more traditional blends or flavors like cannoli, peanut butter cup, Adirondack blueberry and half moon (this flavor took five years to perfect). Take your coffee around the corner for a photo op in front of colorful murals by several local artists.

92 Genesee St., 315-624-9596, [uticacoffeeroasting.com](https://uticacoffeeroasting.com)



Top, an artistic installation of pans and utensils in the back of The Tailor and the Cook. Above, one of their several dining areas.



## Utica Bread

Utica Bread serves light breakfast and lunch, including sandwiches on their freshly made, hand-crafted, European-style artisan breads. Take home their signature baguette, with the perfect texture of crispy crust and chewy delicious crumb, or their Utica sourdough, raisin walnut or potato rosemary loaf, among others. Sample their Viennoiserie, featuring fresh, flaky croissants made with local butter in plain, pain au chocolat, cinnamon snail, spinach and feta, and prosciutto and parmesan. Check out the refrigerated case for cheeses, spreads and accoutrements to go with your loaf.

412 Main St., 315-982-9030, [uticabread.com](http://uticabread.com)

## Rick's Famous Juicy Burgers

Take a trip to the '70s at Rick's Famous Juicy Burgers, a nostalgically decorated restaurant known for elevated fast food: burgers with all the fixings, a spicy crispy chicken sandwich and perfect crinkle-cut fries. Sit down or take out, but either way, cool off with a handspun milkshake in several flavors like chocolate, strawberry or pistachio. The wood-paneled family-friendly spot is adorned with posters, album covers, ephemera and racks of cassette tapes.

421 Broad St., 315-735-7425, [ricksfamous.com](http://ricksfamous.com)

## Bagg's Square Brewing Company

Relax on the patio, at the bar, or at one of the many tables at spacious Bagg's Square Brewing Company. Wet your whistle with 12 authentic German and American specialty beers and an atmosphere inspired by a trip the owner and her husband took to Düsseldorf, Germany. Share locally made brewery bites like Bavarian Pretzels served with bacon jam, beer cheese or Düsseldorf mustard, onion rings and cheese spaetzle before choosing your entrée — consider the German Garbage Plate. Evenings throughout the week feature fun like Taco Tuesday, karaoke, trivia and live music. Attend brunch on Saturday for dishes like chicken schnitzel sliders and a German potato salad-based farmers breakfast.

330 Main St., 315-801-5992, [baggssquarebrewing.com](http://baggssquarebrewing.com)



## BREWERY DISTRICT (WEST UTICA)

### F.X. Matt Brewing Co.

Do not miss F.X. Matt Brewing Co., one of America's oldest family-owned breweries, incorporated in 1888. Discover how Saranac beers — and Utica Club, Flying Dog, Right Coast Spirits and other beverages — are made on an immersive and impressive brewery tour that culminates with a tasting of four beers of your choice in the historical 1888 Tavern. Saranac's brews range from full and velvety, like the Pale Ale and Adirondack Lager, to light and flavorful, like the Blueberry Blonde and Clouded Dream. Nibble bar bites while you savor a beer and a concert in the large outdoor 1888 Biergarten.

830 Varick St., 315-624-2399, [saranac.com](http://saranac.com)

### Nail Creek Pub and Brewery

Chill with friends at Nail Creek Pub and Brewery where you'll find 75-100 bottled craft brews like Founders Brewing's Nitro Oatmeal Stout. Though the team no longer brews their own since COVID, they host tap takeovers by other local craft brewers. Stop by on Sunday for their award-winning brunch complete with mimosas, boozy brunch cocktails and bloody marys. Food and drink specials are offered every night of the week. Chow down on gluten-free street corn tacos, hearty salads or a housemade kielbasa platter.

720 Varick St., 315-793-7593, [facebook.com/nailcreek](https://facebook.com/nailcreek)

### Five Points Public House

Immerse yourself in Irish culture at Five Points Public House. Devour a mouthwatering Reuben sandwich, shepherd's pie, or bangers and mash with a pint of Guinness or one of over 30 types of whiskey on hand. The entire authentic Victorian-era pub was hand-crafted in Dublin, disassembled, shipped and reassembled in Utica, and provides places to be part of the crowd and nooks for private conversations. The patio has a number of tables that seat small groups and a large, long table with a fire-pit center. For a deeper look into the Mohawk Valley's Irish community, visit the volunteer-run Irish Cultural Center attached to the restaurant.

632 Columbia St., 315-733-4228, [fivepointsutica.com](http://fivepointsutica.com)

### The Tramontane Cafe

The Tramontane Cafe, affectionately called The Tram, is a funky coffeehouse located in the Arts District stocked with good vibes, board games and a vintage clothing room. The menu, which lists vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options, features coffees, teas and Italian sodas, a variety of soups, salads, sandwiches and baked goods in a welcoming, retro atmosphere. While you're there, revel in performances by solo musicians, small business pop-ups, game nights, spoken word open mic nights, a drag show, or a new series, Songwriter Storyteller Sessions.

1105 Lincoln Ave., 315-790-5113, [facebook.com/tramontanecafe](https://facebook.com/tramontanecafe)

At left, the Main Street location of Utica Bread, one of two in the city; the other location is in North Utica.





Inside Chesterfield's Tavolo.

### Zeina's Cafe and Catering

Zeina's Cafe and Catering is famous for their Lebanese-style Mediterranean lamb gyros, kibbeh and grape leaves. The owners use family recipes that have been passed down for generations and each year they take trips to Lebanon to source inspiration and authentic ingredients. Gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, vegan and nut-free options are available for dine in or take out at this warm, family-friendly establishment.

607 Varick St., 315-738-0297, [zeinascafeutica.com](http://zeinascafeutica.com)

### Hemstrought's Bakeries

Open since 1920, Hemstrought's Bakeries originated a Utica trademark: the halfmoon (not to be confused with the black-and-white cookie). These heavenly treats are freshly baked from scratch each morning using a recipe that hasn't changed in 100-plus years. The dessert has a cake-like cookie bottom in two different flavors that is half-frosted with smooth chocolate fudge and half with luscious vanilla buttercream; other colors can be requested for your special event. Bonus: they ship! Hemstrought's also bakes pies, cookies, bagels, pastries and artisanal breads. The fresh breads also serve as the foundation for a handful of sandwiches.

900 Oswego St., 315-735-3311, [hemstroughts.com](http://hemstroughts.com)

## NORTH UTICA

### Bella Regina

Visit Bella Regina for a classic Italian lunch or dinner. Try their award-winning chicken riggies, greens and other homemade Italian fare in their red wine-colored dining room or take pasta and desserts to go. There is a comfortable waiting area with tabletop games and the dog-friendly spot offers pups some chicken and rice topped with a bone (at the outside seating only, unless the dog is a service animal).

15 Auert Ave., 315-732-2426,  
search *Bella Regina Utica NY* on Facebook

### Chesterfield's Tavolo

Visit Chesterfield's Tavolo, home of the Original Greens Morelle and chicken riggies. Greens Morelle, better known as Utica greens, were popularized in the late 1980s by the restaurant's chef Joe Morelle. The origins of the equally in-demand chicken riggies aren't certain, but Chesterfield's was one of the first to put it on the menu and it remains a signature dish today. The casual eatery serves Italian standards for lunch and dinner and mixes seasonal specialty cocktails at the full bar. Take your meal inside or on the patio. The restaurant was also featured on the Travel Channel's "Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern" in 2017.

131 N. Genesee St., 315-732-9356, [tavolo315.com](http://tavolo315.com)

### Delmonico's Italian Steakhouse

At Delmonico's Italian Steakhouse, hostesses dressed in fedoras and vests will seat you at your table or booth as Ol' Blue Eyes croons over the sound system. The sophisticated dining room is decorated with fireplaces, chandeliers and caricatures of local figures and celebrities drawn by Syracuse artist J.P. Crangle. While the 24-ounce Delmonico's steak is the star, the Italian-inspired menu offers a variety of pasta dishes partnered with filet, veal, chicken or seafood. Vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and allergen-related requests can be accommodated. Cap off the meal with a cup of rich, hot coffee and a tiramisu or a cannoli.

147 N. Genesee St., 315-732-2300,  
[delmonicositaliansteakhouse.com](http://delmonicositaliansteakhouse.com)



The famous halfmoon cookies from Hemstrought's Bakeries.





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# Making good

||||| CNY SCOUT • FARM TO TABLE • ART PROFILE



## SERVING FOOD WITH LOVE

Amanda Hughes embraces life through her signature mantra, “Indulge.” In 2016, she combined her entrepreneurial spirit with her love of ice cream and coffee and opened The Ice Cream Stand.

After eight successful years, six of them in downtown Syracuse, Hughes is excited to expand beyond the Stand’s basic concept through a more upscale venture in Skaneateles called Cream & Coffee. The new eatery will bring, as she describes it, a “day-to-evening cafe vibe” to the lakeside village.

The menu will feature luscious ice cream desserts

— such as the Italian specialty affogato al caffè — pastries, light bites, salads and fancy coffee concoctions.

“Skaneateles is the perfect setting for Cream & Coffee,” says Hughes, “where I can get inventive by developing new seasonal dishes.” Using locally sourced ingredients is central to her core business values; she cites the abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables, milk and cheeses, baked goods and honey.

“Food naturally brings people together,” she says, “and I enjoy creating community and expressing my creativity through food, served with love.”

*For more information: visit [creamandcoffee.shop](http://creamandcoffee.shop)*



# Puff pieces

A scientific process turns traditional candy into Space Age-style snacks

BY NORAH MACHIA

Are you looking for a unique way to enjoy your favorite sweets? Freeze-dried candy, a treat surging in popularity throughout Central New York, may be the answer.

Local vendors credit the increasing demand for this special candy to videos on social media platforms, particularly TikTok and Instagram, which have spotlighted the freeze-drying process converting classic candies — the likes of Skittles, Airheads, Milk Duds and gummy bears — into crispy and crunchy treats with concentrated “bursts” of flavor. The freeze-dried candy is packaged and sold under creative names that allude to the original product brand (for example, freeze-dried Skittles are sold at one candy store under the name “Rainbow Bites”).

A freeze dryer and vacuum pump system create the special candy by removing the moisture from the original product to change its texture, resulting in a light and crunchy mouthfeel.

“Candy goes into the freeze dryer on trays at room temperature, and when we turn on the freeze dryer, the first thing that happens is it rapidly cools the candy until it’s frozen,” explains Melanie Gallace, owner of Sweet Dream Candy Shoppe, a local maker. “Once the candy is frozen, the freeze dryer initiates the vacuum chamber to pressurize the air, and then the machine begins to heat at a very high

temperature.” For example, Skittles may be heated up to 145 F for three hours, she says.

“After the candy starts to heat, the ice is turned immediately to vapor in the sublimation stage,” Gallace explains. This causes chewy candies to pop; some will become light and airy, while others will become crunchy. “Everything takes place in the same machine,” she adds. Candies with low moisture, such as chocolate, are not good candidates for freeze-drying. However, a chocolate candy with caramel or nougat filling, such as a Snickers bar, will work because both have a higher moisture content.

A bonus: Freeze-dried candy allows those with braces or sensitive teeth to indulge in a treat that won’t stick to their teeth (although the sugar content remains the same).



## SWEET DREAM CANDY SHOPPE, *Baldwinsville*

“Freeze-dried candy has become so popular that other shops couldn’t get it for a while,” says Gallace. “That inspired us to get a freeze dryer and produce it ourselves.”

Gallace operated a second business, Sugar Rush Boutique, for several years in Camillus, and shared space in a commercial kitchen located in the same town. This spring, she closed her Camillus location and moved the freeze dryer to the Baldwinsville shop, where she will continue to offer the Sugar Rush Boutique baking and decorating classes, along with hosting special events such as tea parties. She plans to maintain the Sweet Dream name on the candy shop signage and for Google searches.

The freeze-dried candy is sold online and at the

Baldwinsville store, which has regular hours and offers DoorDash delivery. Gallace also sells wholesale to other businesses. “Freeze-dried candy is not a new concept, it’s just recently gained popularity,” she says.

She also started bringing samples of her freeze-dried candy, including Fruity Bites, Air Noggins and Crunchy Crawlers, to different vendor events and “it started to catch on,” Gallace says. “It really blew up this year.”

The most popular freeze-dried candies are those created from Skittles, Airheads and Fruit Roll-Ups, she adds. “The process not only changes the texture, but it really intensifies the flavors,” she says. “When the moisture gets sucked out, the flavors get more vibrant.”

➔ For more information: *3 W. Genesee St., Baldwinsville, [sugarrush.boutique](http://sugarrush.boutique)*  
Hours: *11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday*

## PINK YETI TREATS, *Tully*

This local business has a special arrangement with its next-door neighbor, the Otisco Volunteer Fire Department. “We make it ourselves in Tully, but we’re using the commercial kitchen at the fire department until we can establish our own,” says owner Heather Oliver. In return, her family business helps out with fundraisers for the fire department. Most of their candy is sold online and shipped to customers or sold at vendor events. Their items, which include candies named Caramel Crunch, Cupcake Marshmallows and Caramel Cold Brew, are also available at Sinfully Sweet in Homer and the Holly Berry Hill summer farm stand in Tully.

Oliver hopes to offer Pink Yeti candy at more local businesses, and the recent rise in popularity should help, she says. “At first, stores weren’t interested in carrying it, and there

was a lot of explaining we had to do at our end,” she says. “Now that it’s become popular on TikTok, everyone has begun to understand it.”

She has been contacted by a new store, Blended Shop, opening this summer in Canastota, to carry the product, and is hoping to sell wholesale to other businesses in the future. “We started it way before it was popular, before anyone knew what it was,” says Oliver, who homeschools her three daughters and has them help with taste-testing and updating the website. “We first began testing it out on family members.”

The process, however, is not a simple one. “You can’t just stick it in a machine and make it work,” she says. “There is a science to it. The process takes time to do it right. It’s not a quick thing.”

➔ For more information: *[pinkyetitreats.com](http://pinkyetitreats.com)*



Opposite, Freeze-dried Skittles and Nerds Gummy Clusters from Ma & Pa’s Kettle Corn. Right, Freeze-dried ice cream sandwiches, mango taffy and gummy bears are some of Speach Family Candy Shoppe’s Fluffed Candy options.





Above, Freeze-dried peach rings and gummy worms sold at BeeKind. Bottom right, The selection from Pink Yeti Treats includes Crisp Rice Treats, Air Puffs and Choco-Nougat Crunch.

### THE SPEACH FAMILY CANDY SHOPPE, *Syracuse*

This long-time family-owned candy shop, open since 1920, purchased equipment to produce freeze-dried candy last year, says Michael E. Speach Jr., president. Their brand, called “Fluffed Candy,” is sold at the Syracuse store and on their website.

The shop offers freeze-dried candy from a variety of classics, including Skittles, Milk Duds, Snickers and Nerds Gummy Clusters, as well as special products, such as freeze-dried ice cream sandwiches. “We make different items as people give us suggestions for what they want to try,” says Speach.

The process has been used for decades. “People have been preparing food like this for a very long time,” says Speach, noting that freeze-drying significantly expands a product’s shelf life.

The freeze-drying process is an exceptionally long one, and depending on the candy, it could take more than 20 hours to produce, he says.

“It’s not only popular with children and teenagers, but adults are also starting to catch on because the candy is nostalgic and reminds them of their youth,” Speach says.

➔ For more information: 2400 Lodi St., Syracuse, [speechfamilycandy.com](http://speechfamilycandy.com)  
Hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday

### BEEKIND, *Syracuse*

Freeze-dried candy was recently added to the store’s selection of local artisan crafts and gifts, says co-owner Jillian Barrett. It makes a nice addition to the store, which carries many other food items.

“People were talking about it, so we decided to offer it,” she says. “It’s perfect for gift baskets.” The freeze-dried candy BeeKind carries is produced in Lake George under the label Space Candy. Popular items include Rings of Saturn, Alien Worms and Rainbow Orbits.

Some customers have stumbled upon the new product while looking for other items in the store. “They decided to try it because it’s something really different,” says Barrett. “Freeze-dried candy is intriguing. The process really pulls out the flavors.”

➔ For more information: 118 Milton Ave., Syracuse, [beekindsyracuse.com](http://beekindsyracuse.com)  
Hours: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday

### MA AND PA’S KETTLE CORN, *Liverpool*

Although this store’s shelves are filled with specialty popcorn, store manager Jojo Claps says the business started offering its own freeze-dried candy in February. “It’s a new and exciting addition to offer the public,” she says. “Everything is made here.” Some of their popular candies include Rainbow Rounds, Fruit Bursts, and Brain Busters. The candy, described as “unique, light and airy, packed with flavors,” may be purchased at the store or online.

➔ For more information: 201 Old 7th North St., Liverpool, [maandpaspopcorn.com](http://maandpaspopcorn.com)  
Hours: Monday-Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



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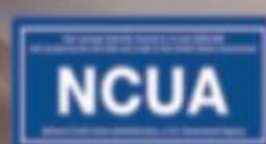
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# FARM FRESH

## All Summer Long

The Great Western Catskills in Delaware County, NY, have always been closely connected to agriculture and farming. The connection is evident as you drive through the rolling hills and notice barns and farm fields around every turn. Once known for its fruitful cauliflower production and dairy farming, it is now known for a bit of everything, such as fresh produce, cheese, and pasture-raised meat.

The opportunities to try farm-fresh products couldn't be easier to access with ten local farmers' markets, roadside farm stands, restaurants specializing in fresh-from-the-farm fare, and local shops that source directly from farmers. Truly nothing tastes better than vegetables that have been picked that morning or meat that was lovingly pasture-raised.

Multiple restaurants have a direct relationship with farmers in the area, such as EightyMain in Delhi, NY. The restaurant sources pork exclusively

from Wild View Farms in Treadwell, NY. The Old Schoolhouse Restaurant in Downsville, NY, procures beef from its family farm. As you arrive, you can watch the cows grazing in the field behind the restaurant.

A favorite summer and fall experience in the Great Western Catskills is Vintage Base Ball. Three local teams go head-to-head while playing by the rules of the 1800s. Visiting teams from across the region travel to the area to play the classic sport in old farm fields and parks.

Whether traveling from a bustling city or visiting from a nearby town, the Great Western Catskills of Delaware County welcome you to take a deep breath, eat a fresh and delicious meal, and unwind while enjoying the natural beauty of the area.



Photo by Christian Harder



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# Summers of the Past-a

Who Want Smoke BBQ  
stirs up a seasonal classic

BY MJ KRAVEC

PHOTO BY ALAINA POTRIKUS BECKETT





Firehouse chef Tamica Barnett runs her business Who Want Smoke BBQ & Catering out of Salt City Test Kitchen on Salina Street in Syracuse.

➔ *Who Want Smoke BBQ & Catering*  
 435 N. Salina St. Syracuse  
 315-395-8134  
 Whowantsmokebbq.com

It's fair to say that firehouse chef Tamica Barnett and her business, Who Want Smoke BBQ & Catering, are on fire. It's a warm day outside Salt City Test Kitchen on North Salina Street where Who Want Smoke is based, and Barnett is in between having just finished catering Founders Day at Christian Brothers Academy and receiving the Madam C.J. Walker Small Business of the Year Award for entrepreneurship, advocacy and philanthropy from the NAACP.

"It's wild," Barnett says of her work pace. "Once June starts, I'm cooking every day." That fast pace will continue through September. In October, Barnett will take a break before picking up again for the holidays. "Last Thanksgiving I smoked 40 turkeys," she says.

With summer barbecue season heating up, everybody seems to want Smoke at their graduations, weddings, family reunions and parties. Barnett says her customers enjoy the nostalgia of cookouts and get togethers that take people to the summers of their past, away from technology and screens. "People like the fact that I can grill on site. I think it takes people back," she says.

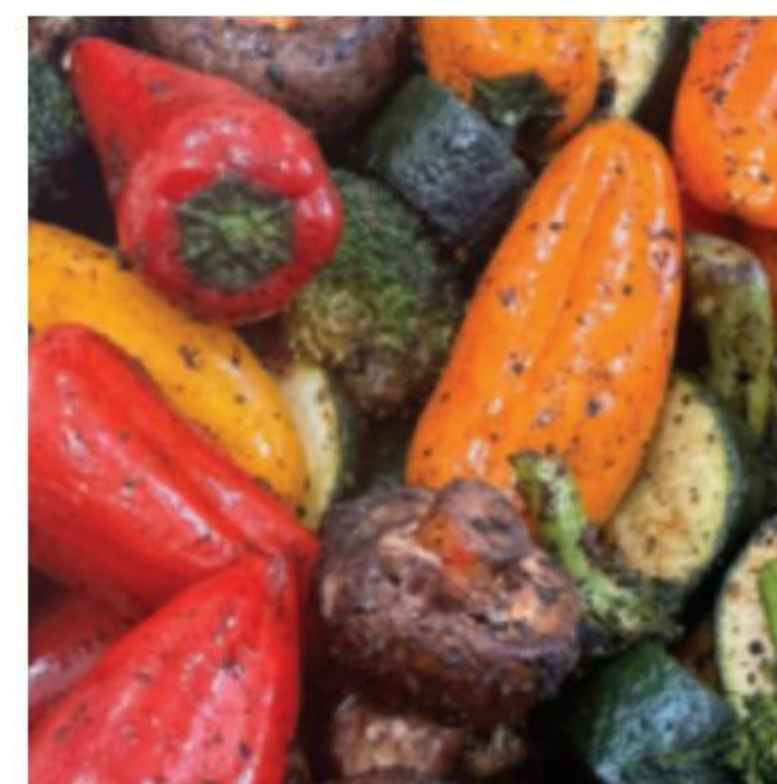
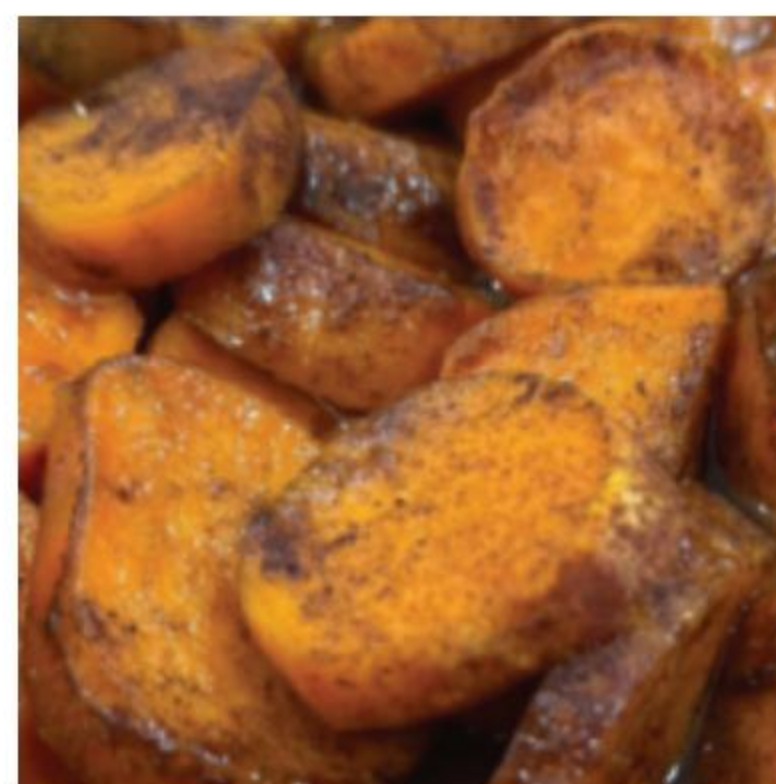
In addition to her duties as owner of Who Want Smoke, which offers internships that teach culinary and life skills to teens, Barnett is also a lieutenant in the Syracuse Fire Department and the city's first Black female firefighter to earn that rank. As firehouse chef, Barnett cooks with her fellow firefighters often and doing so has raised the bar when it comes to certain dishes.

"Most of the time, we all end up cooking together. I've had some of the best meals of my life at the firehouse — like Chicken Riggies, steak. There are certain things I can't even order anymore because they're so amazing [at the firehouse]," Barnett says.

At Who Want Smoke, Barnett offers a selection of Smokin' Dinners including smoked meats, from chicken to salmon to ribs, and grilled kabobs. An Everything Smoked/Grilled Boil entree features seasoned shrimp, clams, crab legs, corn, sausage, broccoli and red potatoes drizzled with garlic, Cajun seasoning and butter. Her Signature Southern Sides, such as collard greens with smoked turkey neck; mac and cheese; baked beans with beef or pork; baked candied yams; grilled, seasoned corn on the cob and fried cabbage with bacon, complete

PHOTOS BY S'MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY WHO WANT SMOKE BBQ & CATERING





the Southern comfort food theme. Barnett also features salads and homemade desserts, including Booper's Sweet Potato Pie, Judy's Punch Bowl Cake (a yellow cake with pudding, whipped cream, strawberries and pineapples), freshly baked sugar and chocolate chip cookies, and drinks including homemade Southern-style sweet tea.

Popular items include smoked lamb "lollipops" (lamb chops served on the bone and eaten like a lollipop) served with bourbon sauce, Jerk chicken, mac and cheese, and macaroni tuna salad.

Within her offerings, Barnett uses local ingredients wherever she can, including homegrown vegetables, honey for her baked beans and meats from Dominick's Market and Lorenzo's Wholesale Foods.

For this issue, Barnett offers a refreshing salad that makes the most of locally grown summer veggies, such as tomatoes, cucumbers and onion, and is easy to prepare — so you can spend more time hanging with the fam.

"I think it blends well with the summer family gathering during the hot weather."



## WHO WANT SMOKE BBQ'S PASTA SALAD

### Ingredients

- 1 pound tri-colored rotini pasta
- 1 16-ounce bottle of zesty Italian dressing
- 1/3 4.34-ounce bottle of McCormick Salad Supreme Seasoning
- 1 1.4-ounce packet of Goya Vegetable Seasoning
- 1 tsp. of black pepper
- 4 ounces Monterey Jack jalapeño cheese cubed
- 4 ounces sharp cheddar cheese cubed
- 1 cucumber sliced
- 1 pint of cherry tomatoes
- 1/2 red onion chopped
- 1 6-ounce bag of thinly sliced turkey or pork pepperoni

Cook pasta according to directions and chill. Then mix together all ingredients and store in refrigerator until ready to serve. Other options to add include fresh broccoli, chilled petite salad shrimp and olives.





# Every last bite

Use leftover food scraps to cut waste, save money

BY MJ KRAVEC

Berries past their prime, brown bananas, too much cooked rice — we feel guilty throwing these things out. And with good reason. Not only are we wasting money (along with the water, labor, agricultural materials, transportation and more that it takes to produce the food), but, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, we're contributing to the roughly 30-40% of food wasted annually in the U.S.

In areas that have landfills, food waste composes about 24% of the refuse, making it the largest contributor to methane, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Food is the most common material that makes it into landfills or is incinerated. This is highly problematic as food composting has so many benefits societally, but it doesn't do us any good in landfills," says Chris Card, coordinator of campus programming and community service at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and a graduate student in Syracuse University's Food Studies Program.

"Globally we are over-producing so much food, and industrial agriculture leads to lessened biodiversity, pollution of both air and water, chemical and medicinal resistances, besides the contributions to GHG (greenhouse gases) emissions. Each of those aforementioned problems is a massive threat to the health of our planet and ourselves," Card says.

In Onondaga County, food waste that is thrown away — leftovers don't

belong in a recycling bin — goes to a waste-to-energy facility, not a landfill. Reducing that amount is still important, says Tammy Palmer, public information officer at the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA).

"Every bit of trash left at the curb has to go somewhere. In Onondaga County, it goes to a Waste-to-Energy Facility. That turns the waste into electricity.

"But there are limits on how much waste can be processed there each year. We don't have unlimited capacity for trash. By reducing food waste, we lighten the load on our waste stream," Palmer says.

In addition, reducing the food we waste has a surprising benefit. For Joe Chisari, owner of Mojo's Miscellaneous, a semiweekly food delivery pop-up, reducing food waste encourages him to cook more creatively. As a chef, Chisari often innovates new recipes to use as much of the food he's purchased as possible, turning scraps into full meals or using them as key ingredients.

"There have been countless times I have repurposed leftovers from a pop-up for delivery days. Some of those meals have turned out to be even better than the original recipes," he says. "Making do with what I have is a big part of my business model and creative flow. I am constantly crafting new fusions with my flavors based on what is available to me, which inspires me to push my creativity forward and build consistency within that."



## FOR MORE

- » Carleigh Bodrug's Scrappy Cooking series @plantyou on Instagram
- » [ocrra.org/organics/reduce-food-waste/reduce-food-waste-at-home](http://ocrra.org/organics/reduce-food-waste/reduce-food-waste-at-home)
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- » [savethefood.com/recipeslisting/scraps?id=24](http://savethefood.com/recipeslisting/scraps?id=24)
- » "The Zero Waste Cookbook" by Torrico and Wasiliev



# Inspired?



## » GET MIXED UP

Growing up Sicilian, Chisari says, you learn that the truest form of Italian food is simple comfort food like pasta. He says one of the easiest things that you can do is throw together whatever you have in your fridge, drown it in sauce and mix in your favorite pasta. “The same applies to fried rice or tacos; saucing up leftovers and adding a starch is a go-to way to make a simple but beautiful meal with whatever you have left in your fridge.”

## » KNOW YOUR DATES

Food label dates don't indicate how long food is safe to eat, with best-by dates suggesting a timeframe for the best flavor or quality, sell-by dates helping retailers decide when to swap out packages and use-by and freeze-by dates indicating when a product is at peak quality. “They don't determine food safety. Infant formula is the exception. Armed with that knowledge, shop in your cupboards first and do an inventory check,” says Palmer. Additionally, be sure to store food properly to extend shelf life.

## » MAKE AND BAKE

Try turning stale bread into something gourmet. “Don't like the ends of a loaf of bread? What about turning them into croutons for a salad later on in the week?” says Card.

## » USE IT ALL

Instead of peeling vegetables, OCRRA advises washing carrots, potatoes and other root veggies thoroughly. You can also make pesto out of almost any greens or simply sauté them. “Throw scraps into an egg scramble or chili,” says Palmer.



## » FREEZE IT

Use ice cube trays to freeze leftover tomato paste or fresh herbs in water for later use. The April 2024 edition of Real Simple advises freezing leftover rice spread flat in a plastic bag. When ready to use, break off what you need. “Pretty much anything can be frozen. I've been testing out frozen meals to see how well they warm up, and we regularly freeze burritos to sell later in order to preserve freshness,” Chisari says.

## » CONSIDER COMPOST

Composting is a great way to give food scraps new life and keep them out of the waste stream. If home composting isn't an option, Onondaga County residents can buy an annual \$25 compost site pass to drop off unlimited food waste (and yard waste) at the Amboy or Jamesville Compost Sites or the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station.

## » REGROW IT

In late fall, Palmer likes to put the bottom of her garden celery, including roots, into a bowl of water near a window. She occasionally rinses and refreshes the water during the winter. “By spring, it is ready to plant again.” You can also try regrowing green onions by placing bulbs in a glass of water on the windowsill.

## » GIVE IT AWAY

Card advises donating food to local pantries if you're not going to use it. Check online to see what they accept. You can also feed scraps to pets — just be sure to research what foods are safe for pets to eat.



## » MAKE STOCK

The simplest action you can take to use up what you have, is to use any and all vegetable scraps for stock, says Chisari. “Add all of your scraps to a big pot of water with a hearty handful of salt and boil it down until the broth is golden,” he says. Those scraps can include bones, ends of carrots, insides of peppers and outer layers of onions to make soup stock that gets strained, says Palmer. “Carrot tops and celery leaves add a great flavor to meals, but many people throw them away,” she says.

## » MAKE A PLAN

Meal planning helps you focus on what you need. Make a list and stick to it. Store new supplies behind the older food you need to use first. If you don't like leftovers, be conscious of how much you cook. Otherwise, throw a date on leftovers so you know when it's time to eat or freeze them, says Palmer.

## » GO FOR VERSATILE

Try buying food items from stores that allow you to control quantities and use your own containers, such as Syracuse Cooperative Market. Doing so might help you avoid waste when it comes to large-quantity commercial products that could go bad before you run out, Card says. Another tip is to buy basic ingredients that can translate into many meals, such as fresh produce that you can use to make sauces, sandwiches, salads, soups, etc. “Buying versatile ingredients and less specialized ingredients helps you ensure that they're being used.”



# CHANGING THE TUNE

**FESTIVAL PUSHES  
THE NEEDLE FOR WOMEN  
IN THE ARTS**

BY GLORIA RIVERA

**J**ess Novak was a music journalist, but after years of covering shows featuring almost exclusively male artists, she decided to do something about it — not with a notebook but with an electric violin. Novak found that when she was covering festivals she would only see women on stage as singers, rarely as instrumentalists. “It wasn’t that it’s bad that women were featured as singers, that’s not the point,” she says. “The point is that to create the illusion that that’s all we do is wrong.” Now she and more than two dozen of her peers are showcasing the work of women artists through the F.I.R.E Festival. This annual event, which Novak began in 2022, features all women vendors, including small businesses, artists and, of course, musicians.

“I was so tired of writing about men all the time,” she says of her conversion to performer. “I literally just thought that if no one else is going to do it, I’m going to do it.”









F.I.R.E. is an acronym for “females inspire, rock, empower,” a name that reflects the festival’s mission. The goal is to highlight the diversity of the women who participate, while also challenging the perception of women in the arts industry. “That’s why I wanted to create this festival — to not only prove [the perceptions were] incorrect but also prove how successful something can be if you show everything they do,” she says. “I’ve had authors, hula hoopers, ballet dancers, burlesque dancers, rock musicians, chicks on piano, chicks on cajón, ladies who make jewelry out of bones — the craziest things you can ever imagine. And that’s where people are missing out.”

Some of the kindling for F.I.R.E. came from open mic nights at Maxwells in downtown Syracuse. Misse Fedele, a photojournalist and educator, credits these evenings as a catalyst for photographers, bands and even painters to gather and make art. The two women have been friends for nearly a decade, and Fedele has participated in all three F.I.R.E Festivals.

“It’s nice to see women supporting women, which isn’t always the norm, especially coming out of a competitive field,” Fedele says. “Everyone is there

to lift each other up, support each other and promote each other.”

Novak’s love for music dates back to her childhood violin lessons, time in the church choir and bands her older brother introduced her to, such as Led Zeppelin. She eventually put the idea of playing professionally on the back burner, thinking it wasn’t feasible. Novak studied communications and music industry in college, then received a master’s in arts journalism. She loved writing about music for outlets like the Syracuse New Times and Relix, but she also taught herself how to play various instruments after college. She would watch videos and pay attention to the chords, ultimately learning how to play guitar, piano and some percussion.

Musician Ashley Cox, whom Novak met in 2011 after seeing Cox and her husband perform with their band, Professional Victims, is among the artists she covered as a writer. Novak recalls meeting Cox as a “super fan,” but the two have since developed a relationship as friends and collaborators.

Cox says she admires Novak’s storytelling abilities. “During 2020, there were riots, politics, families, friends,

Above, Novak performing “Helter Skelter” at Ladies Night at the Palace in 2018. The event, organized by Joanna Nix Jewett, celebrated local female singers. Opposite, Ashley Cox performs at F.I.R.E. Festival in March.

PHOTOS BY MARTIN GOETTSCHE, JUSTIN TRIMM/HEY ALEC PRODUCTIONS, LLC



you know, battling over politics,” Cox says. “And Jess comes out with a song called ‘Counting on Love.’”

For her, the importance in Novak’s music lies not only in the ways Novak writes her lyrics, but in how she approaches even the most difficult times. “We’re all trying to figure out how to express ourselves, and most of the time we’re asked to pick a side,” Cox says. “This woman writes the most beautiful song about love and what we can do to bring out the best in ourselves.”

The pair has now worked on two F.I.R.E Festivals together. “I always hesitate to say that women are an underdog,” Cox says. “I don’t think it’s coming from a place of lack, but just of celebration.” She views the festival as a chance to showcase the talents of women from around Central New York and to provide more opportunities for them to meet, collaborate and create an encouraging environment.

These collaborations have allowed Novak to think deeply about the vulnerability within her own music. She generally writes about things she’s going through, whether that’s love, loss or even the constants of everyday life. “My songwriting has tried to express the more day-to-day real things,” she says.

She describes her most recent song, “Falling,” as “about being with someone who you keep falling in love with. And it’s not that everything’s, like, exploding. It’s just a discreet constant.”

In this song she sings:

*They say love it fades, it fades away.*

*But mine, it grows every day.*

*I don’t know if it’s you, don’t know if it’s me,*

*I don’t care, I just, I believe.*

Now married with a child, Novak finds herself inspired by this new reality. “I’ve thought about my next album being called ‘Songs in the Middle,’” she says. “We spend our life listening to a lot of things that are very extreme, but we live our life not there.” As she grows as an individual, her art comes along with her, and she finds that the joy she feels is reflected in her songs.

Novak’s passion for her work goes deeper than wanting to move the needle for women: “I started playing for my grandma when she was in the nursing home,” she says. “And I started because she couldn’t really do anything else. ... It was the last thing she could appreciate.”

As an artist, she measures her success by the level of joy she brings rather than the numbers and statistics



For more information: visit [jessrocknovak.com](http://jessrocknovak.com)



“I always hesitate to say that women are an underdog. I don’t think it’s coming from a place of lack, but just of celebration.”

Musician Ashley Cox

coming out of her shows. “That’s how I started, playing for her and then playing other nursing homes. That was the best because it wasn’t about me at all. It was about bringing this enjoyment to other people. Those are the best shows.”

The tangible impact of the festival is one element that pushes Novak to continue planning and curating F.I.R.E. “Venues will reach out and say, ‘I saw your F.I.R.E fest lineup and it inspired me to incorporate more women in my venue,’” she says. “So it’s great to create this community.”

The other element is simply how grateful she is for the ability to make music full-time. “When I think about 10 years ago, when I was just starting, I didn’t think I had any chance of making this a career. Then I was like: Just do it. And now here I am.”

*Gloria Rivera is a recent graduate of the Goldring Arts Journalism & Communications Program at Syracuse University’s Newhouse School of Public Communications.*



## Galleries



"Nightfall: Oil paintings by Sarah Tietje-Mietz" at Cazenovia Artisans

### ARTRAGE GALLERY

505 Hawley Avenue, Syracuse. 315-218-5711, [artragegallery.org](http://artragegallery.org). Open 2 to 6 p.m., Wednesday-Friday, noon to 4 p.m., Saturday (and by appointment for groups).

**Ben Altman: I Own This Stolen Land.** In 2021, photographer Ben Altman and his wife bought 38 acres of land next to their home in rural Danby, NY, to prevent logging and development. He recognized that the title to this beautiful land originated in genocide. More than 200 years ago, the Gayogohó:nq' (Cayuga), one of the Six Nations of the Hodiñhsq:nih (Haudenosaunee) Confederacy, were violently and fraudulently dispersed from the homelands they had occupied and nurtured for over 10,000 years. Despite two centuries of genocidal repression and cultural suppression they remain resilient, but live almost entirely in diaspora, in Oklahoma, Ontario, Canada and scattered across North America. "I Own This Stolen Land" is a multidisciplinary project that seeks to acknowledge and take responsibility for the theft of the land; understand the natural systems, economic pressures, ecological stresses and options for stewardship of the site; invite Gayogohó:nq' people to visit and to undertake traditional and arts activities, building trust between them and communities in Tompkins County; and develop scalable models for cooperative access to ancestral land. Runs through July 20.

### CAZENOVIA ARTISANS

39 Albany Street, Cazenovia. 315-655-2225, [info@cazenoviaartisans.com](mailto:info@cazenoviaartisans.com). Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

**Human Nature: Bob Ripley and Dave Eichorn.** An artistic collaboration of watercolor paintings and contemporary rustic furniture focused on our interactions with the natural world. Cazenovia Artisans is excited to announce that Bob Ripley is returning for the month of July. A lifelong watercolorist, Bob studied art and design at Syracuse University. His work has won national awards and is widely collected. Bob's paintings are inspired by his outdoor experiences, field notes and photographs. Dave has been making and designing furniture for over 40 years blending domestic and tropical exotic woods into a combination of contemporary and rustic form. Dave has worked with Bob on various projects over many years, but for the first time is coordinating his furniture design and inlay work with Bob's wildlife art. Both artisans have spent a good deal of time fishing and hiking outdoors and are excited to express their connection to the natural world through their work. Artist reception 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, July 12. Runs July 1 through 31.

**Nightfall: Oil paintings by Sarah Tietje-Mietz.** Sarah Tietje-Mietz is an artist, writer and old building enthusiast. Her oil paintings explore streetscapes and architecture in quiet, nocturnal moments, each

ARTWORK COURTESY CAZENOVIA ARTISANS



seeking to capture the luminosity and intrigue created as night falls. While the work is deeply autobiographical and connected to personal experiences of placemaking and memory, they invite viewers to imagine and project their own narratives onto them. Opening reception 2 to 5 p.m., Sat., Aug. 3. Runs Aug. 1 through 31.

### COMMUNITY FOLK ART CENTER

805 E. Genesee Street, Syracuse. 315-442-2230, communityfolkartcenter.org. Summer hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Hours may vary based on programming.

**Anthony “TONEWASH” Washington: People, Please.** The artist examines the dynamics of growing up a neurodivergent Black male in a predominantly white environment. His exhibition titled “People, Please.” creates visual hip hop through elements of graffiti, photography and sculpture. Runs June 18 to Aug. 17.

### EDGEWOOD GALLERY

216 Tecumseh Road, Syracuse. 315-445-8111, edgewoodartandframe.com. Open 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. Closed Sunday-Monday. Free.

**Open Figure Drawing 35th Anniversary Exhibit.** Celebrating the 35th year of OFD with figure drawings from participants over the years, and figurative sculpture by Arlene Abend. Also showing metalsmith jewelry by Susan Machamer. Runs through Aug. 9.

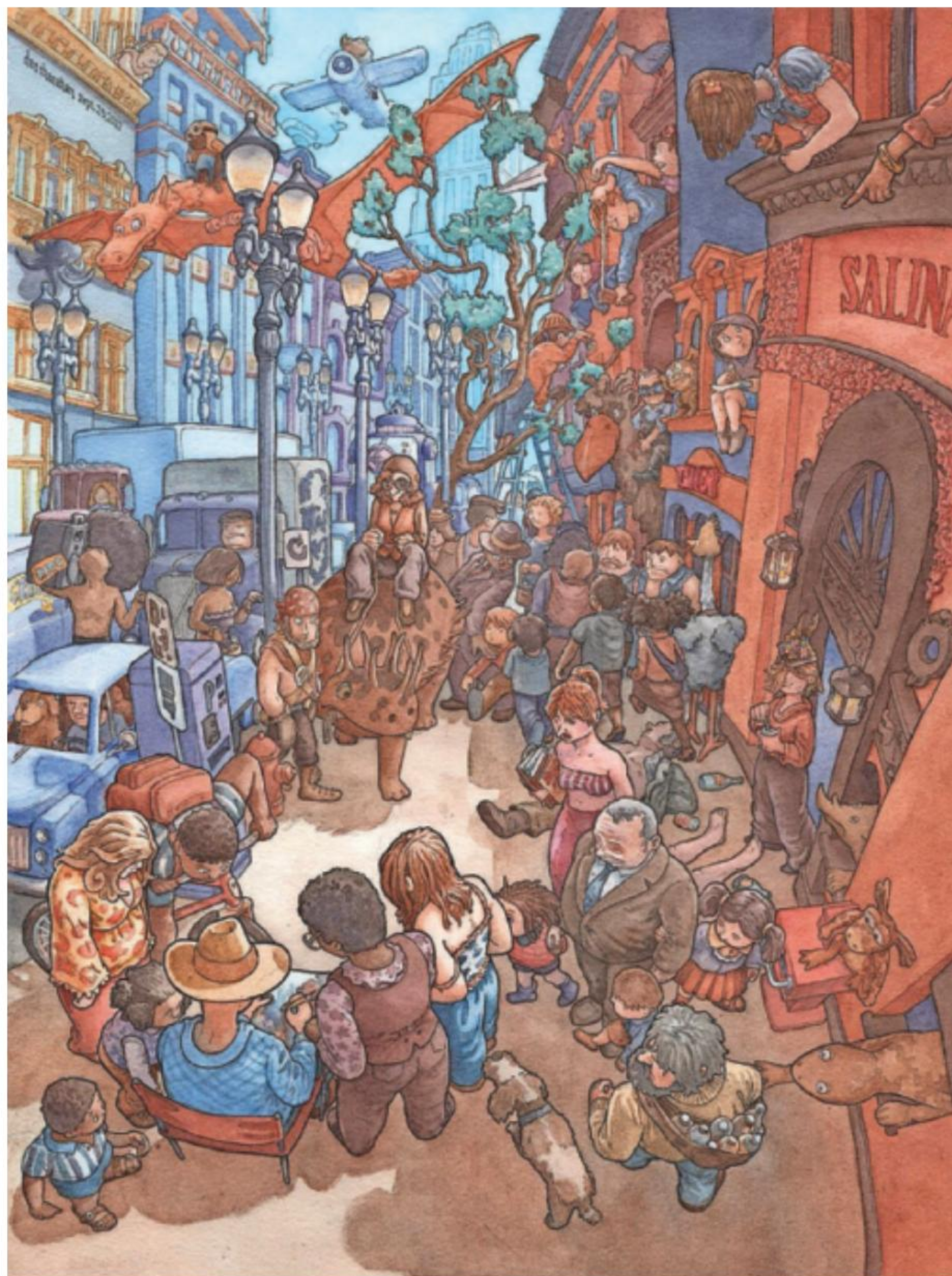
**Confabulations: Art as Storytelling.** Dan Bacich: box assemblages made with groupings of found objects carefully arranged in compositions that give rise to narratives where initially none were apparent. Dan Shanahan: fantastical watercolor paintings filled with interesting characters and perspectives creating worlds of stories. Deb Rogers: multimedia jewelry. Opening reception 6 to 8 p.m., Aug. 16. Runs Aug. 16 through Sept. 27.

### EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART

401 Harrison Street, Syracuse. 315-474-6064, everson.org. Open noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday and Friday, noon to 8 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Closed Monday-Tuesday. \$5 suggested donation.

**Natasha Smoke Santiago.** Akwesasne Mohawk artist Natasha Smoke Santiago has spent the last two decades mastering traditional Haudenosaunee pottery techniques. Her unique work incorporates storytelling, activism and the exploration of foodways, including experiments with seed keeping and collaborations with Indigenous chefs. Her exhibition at the Everson will be augmented with a selection of historical Haudenosaunee artifacts and tools drawn from the collection of the New York State Museum in Albany. Runs through Aug. 18.

**Off the Rack.** Off the Rack is the happy by-product of a major renovation of the Everson’s on-site art storage. As hundreds of paintings and framed works are displaced from their racks while renovations take place, the public has an unprecedented opportunity to



“Artist Painting on a Street like Salina Street” by Dan Shanahan at Edgewood Gallery

“The Sight Gag” by Dan Bacich at Edgewood Gallery



## Galleries

view objects that have been in deep storage for years, never-before-seen recent acquisitions and some perennial favorites — all hung together salon-style in our exhibition galleries. This smorgasbord of paintings and works on paper showcases the breadth and depth of the museum's collections and provides a glimpse into the world of collections management and care. Runs through Summer 2024.

**CNY Artist Initiative: Manuel Matias.** Manuel Matias is a creator of nostalgic street art, specializing in miniature dioramas. His passion lies in reviving the past by merging diverse art forms and combining influences from different artists to resurrect forgotten moments in intricate detail. Through this fusion of creativity, Matias aims to transport viewers to a bygone era, where memories are rekindled and cherished anew. He also encourages creativity in his two daughters by letting them add their own touches to his miniatures. Their innocent and imaginative contributions bring a unique charm and unexpected element to Matias' work. Runs through Aug. 18.

**Clayscapes.** When he was in college in the 1970s, Syracuse artist and entrepreneur Don Seymour named a series of ceramic landscape sculptures "Clayscapes." This hybrid word, with roots in both the earth and the ceramic community that is built around shaping it, felt so powerful that when he founded his ceramic supply business in 1982, he also named it Clayscapes. This exhibition pays tribute to the powerful connection between artists and the world around them. From the large-scale pastoral sculptures of Robert Arneson to the diminutive cityscapes of Lidya Buzio, the Everson's ceramic collection is filled with work that

Paulina Velázquez Solís, "Un río de todas las épocas II / A river of all ages II" at Light Work



documents the joys and sorrows of humankind's relationship with the Earth. Runs through Oct. 20.

**The Ceramic Nationals: 1932-1972.** In 1932, Syracuse Museum of Fine Art director Anna Olmsted created a modest juried exhibition of studio ceramics by artists in New York state to honor the late Adelaide Alsop Robineau. Little did Olmsted know that this first exhibition, which was displayed on draped crates provided by a local coffin company, would ultimately prove to be the bedrock upon which the 20th-century Studio Ceramics Movement was built. Response to the first juried exhibition was immediate. Prominent artists lobbied Olmsted to open the exhibition to artists from other states, and the Ceramic Nationals were born. The Ceramic Nationals purchase prizes in the Everson's collection number more than 200 and tell the story of the birth of the Studio Ceramics Movement in the depths of the Great Depression through its maturation in the 1950s, and ultimately, to the early 1970s, when the field of ceramics splintered into an unwieldy number of factions. Containing early masterworks by seminal artists like Maria Martinez, Peter Voulkos, Marguerite Wildenhain, Minnie Negoro and Edwin and Mary Scheier, the Ceramic Nationals collection represents the most cohesive collection of American Studio Pottery in existence.

### LA CASITA CULTURAL CENTER

109 Otisco Street, Syracuse. 315-443-2151, [lacasita.syr.edu](http://lacasita.syr.edu). Open noon to 6 p.m. Tues. through Friday.

**Young Art Exhibit 2024.** The 2024 Young Art Exhibit celebrates the creative talent in La Casita's community and the achievements of our young (and young-at-heart) artists. The new exhibit will feature drawings, comic illustrations and installation pieces by participants in La Casita's arts and writing programs throughout the academic year. Runs through Aug. 16.

La Casita is a program of Syracuse University established to advance an educational and cultural agenda of civic engagement through research, cultural heritage preservation, media and the arts — bridging the Hispanic communities of the University and Central New York.

### LIGHT WORK KATHLEEN O. ELLIS GALLERY

316 Waverly Avenue, Syracuse. 315-443-1300, [lightwork.org](http://lightwork.org). Open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday-Friday, and 1 to 9 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. For guided tours, contact [info@lightwork.org](mailto:info@lightwork.org).

**Paulina Velázquez Solís: Un río de todas las épocas II / A river of all ages II.** Ithaca-based multimedia artist Paulina Velázquez Solís is the recipient of the first open UVP Regional Commission competition for her proposal entitled "Un río de todas las épocas II / A river of all ages II." This project, which will include interactive and performance-based elements, will explore Central New York as a site of "post-industrial natural wonder." Using regionally extinct species in local herbaria as tools, Velázquez Solís' work will meditate on the "tension between what prevails and what has shifted or disappeared" in a field of "memory, transformation, and territory." Runs July 18 through Sept. 21. Live Performance on the Plaza: 8:30 p.m., July 26 at the Everson Museum, 401 Harrison Street.

ARTWORK COURTESY LIGHT WORK





**According to the Laws of Chance.** “According to the Laws of Chance” is a group exhibition of photographs presenting work by Cheryl Miller, Claire A. Warden, Jaclyn Wright, Josh Thorson, Kyle Tata, Louis Chavez and Will Stith, as well as works from Light Work’s collection by Cecil McDonald Jr., James Welling, Peter Finnemore and Rita Hammond. The image makers selected for this show embrace the unpredictable and find ways to amplify chance to suit their own conceptual and creative needs. Reception 5 to 7 p.m., July 26. Runs through Aug. 16.

**2024 Light Work Grants in Photography: Malik Abdoulmoumine, Rosely Htoo and Kari Varner.** The Light Work Grants in Photography are part of Light Work’s ongoing effort to provide support and encouragement to Central New York artists working in photography within a fifty-mile radius of Syracuse. The two runners-up for the 2024 Light Work Grants in Photography are Alex Cassetti and Ian Sherlock Molloy. Established in 1975, the Light Work Grants program is one of the longest-running photography fellowships in the country. Each recipient receives a \$3,000 stipend and appears in Contact Sheet: The Light Work Annual. This year’s judges were Sydney Ellison, Lacey McKinney and Darin Mickey. Reception 5 to 7 p.m., July 26. Runs through Aug. 16.

#### ONONDAGA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

321 Montgomery Street, Syracuse. 315-428-1864, [cnyhistory.org](http://cnyhistory.org). Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday-Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Free but donations encouraged. Check their website for updates.

**Suit Up! A Look at Syracuse Sporting Uniforms Through the Years.** “Suit Up!” is up in the Onondaga Historical Museum’s large first-floor gallery. The exhibit, in collaboration with Syracuse University’s Special Collections Research Center, displays various Syracuse sporting uniforms from throughout the decades. Local professional and collegiate teams are featured in this sporty jaunt through local nostalgia, celebrating the history of Syracuse athletics. Runs through December 2024.

**Look At What We Got!** One of the most common questions the archivists and curators of the Onondaga Historical Association are asked is, “Will the document or artifact I’m donating be on exhibit?” The answer is always a resounding, “possibly.” With limited exhibit space, and exhibit topics that don’t always include every item in our collection, OHA has many magnificent items preserved and protected, but not on display. “Look At What We Got” is OHA’s chance to exhibit an eclectic assortment of artifacts and documents that were donated to OHA in the last five years. The exhibit will also provide insight into the choices OHA’s archivists and curators make when accepting donations. Runs through May 2025.

“Bride” by Will Stith at Light Work



## Galleries



**Pages of the Past: The Personal Archives of Scrapbooks.** This is OHA's newest exhibit, featuring bits of history as collected and curated in personal scrapbooks of Syracuse community members that have since come into OHA's archival collection. The exhibit displays both original scrapbooks and interactive reproductions that guests are encouraged to flip through and explore. "Pages of the Past" celebrates the history of scrapbooking and the local residents who have taken the time through the years to compile records of their lives and the community. Runs through Spring 2025.

"Off the Rack" at Everson Museum of Art

### SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

222 Waverly Avenue, Syracuse. [library.syr.edu](http://library.syr.edu). Open to the public 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Friday. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. 6th Floor is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday and until 7 p.m. on Wednesdays.

#### Spring 2024 SCRC Exhibition — Plasticized: Creativity, Consumption and Labor in 20th Century Plastics.

Curated by Lead Curator and Curator of Plastics and Historical Artifacts, Courtney Hicks, this exhibit presents evidence from the perspectives of plastics creators, artists, innovators, engineers, laborers, consumers and corporations amidst the acceleration of plastic production in 20th-century material culture. This exhibition illustrates shifting cultural perspectives surrounding this enigmatic and complicated material while highlighting plastic innovations and developments in fashion, art, packaging, architecture, industrial design and more. Featuring materials from the Plastics collection area at Syracuse University Libraries' Special Collections Research Center, these selections provide historical traces directly from those who imagined, designed, worked with, consumed, promoted, activated, marketed and resisted this uniquely synthetic material. Engage with historical plastics from the past through a multitude of lenses — all from the ascent of plastic within American industry, which directly contributed to today's saturation of plastic products in our everyday lives. Runs through Aug. 1.

### SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY'S NATIONAL VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

Daniel & Gayle D'Aniello Building, 101 Waverly Avenue, Syracuse. [vpa.syr.edu/academics/creative-arts-therapy/art-therapy-ms/nvrc-gallery](http://vpa.syr.edu/academics/creative-arts-therapy/art-therapy-ms/nvrc-gallery). Open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday-Wednesday and Friday, 2 to 5 p.m. Thursday.

#### Paper Trail: Works by Veteran Photographers, Cartoonists and Sketch Artists.

"Paper Trail" features works on paper and film by military veteran artists within the collections of Syracuse University's Special Collections Research Center and the SU Art Museum. Artists include cartoonists Dave Breger, Mort Walker, Brad Anderson, Alan Dunn and photographers affiliated with Syracuse University's Military Visual Journalism Program. Runs through Aug. 2.

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PHOTO COURTESY EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART





Wittig's Ice Cream on James Street in Eastwood.

## FREEZE FRAME

A look at CNY's ice cream history

BY TOM HUNTER

Drive around Central New York in July or August and you will see numerous stands frequented by ice cream lovers slaking their cravings for the cold summer treat.

Central New Yorkers have been eating ice cream since at least the 1850s. Ice cream saloons welcomed unchaperoned women and their children who enjoyed eating meals and desserts in a safe public location. However, in a January 1, 1857, article in the Syracuse Daily Courier newspaper, girls were discouraged from overeating the frozen confection, citing that their New Year's resolutions for the year should include "...eschew[ing] ice cream saloons, unless upon special occasions and then don't select the most expensive dishes."

Thomas Gates welcomed customers to his ice cream and confectionary store at 69 S. Salina St., Syracuse, in May 1857. His newspaper ad in the Syracuse Daily Courier featured ice cream drops along with candy, chocolate and pastries. Two years later, John S. Hoefler, at 12 N. Salina St., offered his customers "the most delicious kinds of ice cream, soda water,

cakes and confectionary." Jenkins' Ice Cream Depot on East Fayette Street in Syracuse supplied "good quality ice cream, promptly and in good order," to picnics, festivals, weddings, suppers, families and ice cream dealers in the 1870s.

By the end of the 19th century, a Post-Standard newspaper reporter estimated that ice cream lovers in Syracuse were consuming between 2,500 and 3,000 quarts daily. In the 1920s, Syracuse Ice Cream Company boasted that their manufacturing facility made ice cream with the most modern sterilized equipment. It also had a fleet of 24 delivery vehicles that brought ice cream all over CNY. Throughout the 20th century, ice cream aficionados could select from a variety of locally made flavors from Best Ice Cream, Netherland Ice Cream Company, Marble Farms, Darling Ice Cream Company, Byrne Dairy and others.

Today, Byrne Dairy and Gannon's Ice Cream still make and sell their own ice cream.

*Tom Hunter is curator of collections at OHA.*

PHOTO COURTESY ONONDAGA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



Friday, August 16, 2024

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## Last word



WITH

### GINA HUSTED

Skippy's Ice Cream Co-Owner, Event Coordinator



BY MJ KRAVEC

With novelty and soft serve ice cream trucks and carts, Skippy's brings treats to Central New Yorkers from April to mid-October. As owner, with her husband, Don, and event coordinator for Skippy's, Gina Husted has a sweet job bringing happiness on a stick (or in a cone) to people all over town. We sat down with Husted to find out what it's like to drive an ice cream truck and why Bomb Pops are the bomb.

**What time do you get up in the morning and how do you take your coffee?** I love my sleep. I am a night owl, so depending on how busy of a day is scheduled, I get up accordingly — could be 7, could be 9. Coffee? Not for me. McDonald's sweet tea is my go-to drink any time of day.

**What's your favorite season in CNY?** If I didn't say summer I'd be in trouble. Even though it's busy for me, I still love the sun.

**What's it like to drive an ice cream truck? You must get a lot of attention.** It's so fun! It's great when you're at a stop light, either the little kids are excited and waving to you, or the big kids are yelling "Hey, Skippy's" out their car windows. The trucks definitely get noticed.

**As a kid, what was your go-to pick from the ice cream truck?** I remember the Mister Softee truck coming around, that was always fun. Soft serve vanilla. If the regular ice cream truck came by, I'd always have to have the chocolate sundae crunch bar — by far my favorite and always takes me back to childhood.

**What do you like most about your job?** What's not to like? Everyone loves ice cream so everyone is always happy. Our



customers are the best! They make my job easy. I tell them what we have to offer and pricing and they tell me which truck and option they'd like. We make working together simple and stress free.

**Favorite ice cream?** Hmm. If I'm on the soft serve truck, black raspberry milkshake. If I'm on a novelty truck, I tend to always have a Bomb Pop. So many choices to choose from and refreshing when the truck gets hot! But if I'm on the funnel cake truck — yes, ice cream on funnel cakes — I love funnel cake, so that's what I make myself when the day is done. We aren't your typical ice cream truck.

**You certainly spread a lot of cheer around CNY.**

I am lucky that I love what I do and I get to work with great people. But I have to thank our team, our repeat customers, all the festival promoters like OMF Events, Galaxy Communications, the Pride Parade, USA Clay Target, all our schools, the SFTA, local events like "Let Me Be Great," Gigi's Playhouse, hospitals, churches and local towns that include us when planning their events. We love being at all of them and I especially want to thank our community for always coming out and supporting us, as I couldn't do what I do without any of them or you.

PHOTO COURTESY SKIPPY'S ICE CREAM, SHUTTERSTOCK



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